

DISCIPLE-MAKING: A STRATEGIC METHOD OF INCREASING
AND MAINTAINING CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH AND
VITALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH.

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ABSTRACT

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The context for this doctoral project proposal is Global EmPOWERment Ministries, (GEM). GEM has experience growth with approximately 600 hundred partners on the roll; however, attendance fluctuates between 125 and 150, on any given Sunday. This project's objectives focused on increasing, retaining and maintaining GEM's partnership/membership. The hypothesis was, if the church adopts a biblical model of discipleship, which meets the relevant needs of the people in the community, it would reach a greater level of partnership/membership retention. The methodology for the research was qualitative research. The overall project was successful in that retention and worship participation began to increase.

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Honor and glory to God the creator of the universe who made this all possible. I express sincere appreciation and gratitude to the partners of Global EmPOWERment Ministries for their willingness to participate in this process. Sincere thanks and appreciation to the context associates Anthony Thomas, Janice Thomas, Sandra Favors, Arlene Peats and Lyn Gordon for their assistance in the implementation, collection and analysis of the materials and data. Genuine appreciation and gratitude is being extended to Cheryl N. Lawrence and Connie Carter for their continued support and encouragement throughout this journey. Words are not sufficient to express the gratitude and thankfulness of mentors Dr. Keith D. Lawrence and Dr. Kenneth Marcus whose support and encouragement served to keep this project on time and on task. To my friend, prayer partner, exalter and context associate Naomi McLain who prayed with the writer and kept this writer encouraged, a million thank you and all my love.

I give thanks to all those who encouraged and helped to inform and offer valuable criticism and suggestions. To Dr. Stafford J. N. Wicker, Dr. Sharon Wheeler, and Dr. Don Olgatree who served as Professional Associates on this project. Your careful reading of my document along with your keen insights assisted in developing an academically sound document that both writer and seminary will be proud of. To Dr. Donnell J. Moore, for serving as professional associate, church growth consultant and expert in the area of disciple making and evangelism, editor, and for working with me during this process which has made a significant impact on me and this project. I am most thankful to God,

Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit for guidance and leadership. Sincere thanks and appreciation is extended to President Wendy J. Deichmann, to the associate dean of doctoral studies Dr. Harold Hudson, and all the staff of United Theological Seminary, Dayton Ohio for making this opportunity possible. Finally, sincere thanks and appreciation is extended to my cohort group; individuals who came together in the pursuit of excellence for effective leadership and prophetic preaching in the 21st century under the mentorship and leadership of Dr. Keith D. Lawrence and Dr. Kenneth Marcus. The connections, relationships and promises established with each of you will always be remembered.

DEDICATION

This Doctor of Ministry project is dedicated to my beloved children and grandchild: Adrien, Vonchell, and Isaiah, and to my niece and grandniece Jillian and Ava.

INTRODUCTION

In the book, *What Every Pastor Should Know* by Gary McIntosh and Charles Arn, research was gathered concerning the nature of church membership retention. Two of the most critical findings were:

- Of all the members who drop out of church, 82 percent leave in the first year of their membership. Retention efforts are thus critical in the first twelve months after a member joins a church.
- The pattern of dropout is not random. Most leave close to their six-month tenure or close to their twelve-month tenure. So church members seem to give new churches a "test" at both six months and twelve months. If the church passes the test at six months, the member will stay for another six months. If the church passes the test at the one-year mark, the member is likely assimilated into the church.¹

Ultimately, McIntosh and Arn say there are six issues that stop members from dropping out of church, 1) Have I made friends in this church? 2) Is there a place in the church where I fit? 3) Does this church really want me? 4) Are my new friends as good as my old friends? 5) Does the group meet my needs? 6) Is my contribution important?

Surprisingly, most of those who will drop out will do so before the end of their first year. And at six months and twelve months respectively, new members will intuitively ask themselves six questions. How they respond to those questions ultimately determines if they will stay or leave.²

¹Gary McIntosh and Charles Arn, "Six Critical Issues that Prevent Church Members from Dropping Out," accessed January 9, 2014, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/six-critical-issues-to-prevent-church-members-from-dropping-out-93940/>.

²Ibid.

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a biblical model of discipleship that will meet the needs of the partners/members and the people of the community. This will allow Global Empowerment Ministries (GEM) to reach greater levels of partnership/membership retention and increased growth. One of the targeted goals of this project will focus on addressing the deficiencies among dissatisfied partners/members, and to address these deficiencies' effectively, with the objective to maintain partnership/membership and eliminate their intention to leave the church. Another targeted goal will be to educate current satisfied partners/members and encourage them to engage with new converts and new partners/members to create connection within the body.

In chapter one, Ministry Focus, the reader will be given insight in to my spiritual journey and how God uniquely positioned me to be jointly fitted together with my context, Global Empowerment Ministries (GEM) in order that ministry through problem solving could take place.

Chapter two, State Of The Art In This Ministry Project provides a panoramic view of the problem of discipleship, evangelism and membership retention through the lenses of various scholars and experts who have grappled with this problem and have attempted to provide viable solutions. In this chapter we will explore what others have done, recommendations for problem resolution and models that can be studied and used to develop a contextual model for this ministry project.

In chapter three, we will explore the foundational resources that gave validity to the problem and the basis for establishing a problem-solving model. Here, the biblical, historical, and theological foundations take shape as reliable sources of research. The

presupposition surrounding these foundations is that if the problem and solution can be found in scripture, throughout history, and in the writings of classical and modern-day scholars, then the problems of the context would have merit. Using prior models and examples to guide the construction of this contextual problem-solving model would not only provide relief for GEM but for other congregations struggling with the same or similar concerns.

Chapter four explores the Methodology or outlines the process by which the problem-solving models is developed and implemented. In this chapter, the reader will be able to see first hand the actual steps used to gather data to test the hypothesis and validate the presuppositions used to develop this project.

In chapter five, the results of the fieldwork will be revealed. In this chapter we will analyze the results of the qualitative model used to extrapolate data in support of the findings. This chapter gets at the heart of the entire project as existing models of problem-solving, foundational research and presuppositions are brought to bear based on the results of the field study.

Finally, in chapter six, Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion, critical reflection is given on the totality of this work. Here, the reader is given opportunity to understand my thoughts, feelings, and beliefs after the work has been completed. What worked, what could have been done differently and how the model can be improved are some of the thoughts shared in this concluding chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Synergy occurs when the result of an action is greater than the sum of the parts. Synergy is created when things work in concert together to create an outcome that is in some way of more value than the total of what the individual inputs is. To recognize synergy in Stella Biswah's life story and that of Global EmPOWERment Ministries (GEM), one must observe how my life intersects with the context of my ministry at GEM to arrive at the ministry focus for this Doctor of Ministry project.

The Beginning

The story began in the tiny village of Bonasse in Cedros, located in Trinidad. Trinidad is a small island located in the Caribbean, West Indies. There is diversity among the population and the culture. Similar to the United States it is a melting pot with people from many nations around the world. Trinidadians are a mix of people from India, Pakistan, Africa, and Europe, South American, Asia and many other parts of the world. The island of Trinidad is only 1,864 square miles. Trinidad population can be best described as cosmopolitan, which hosts a mix environment both geographically and demographically.

Born on the island of Trinidad, into a family with thirteen children of whom I was the eleventh. My parents were immigrants from India. In my formative years, I was exposed to many different religious cultures within my own family and on the island. My

father was a practicing Hindu, and mother was a practicing Muslim. Because of the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church on the island, all my parent's children were raised in Catholicism. A few of the other religious cultures to which I was exposed are, the Seven Day Adventist customs and traditions, the Pentecostal Movement, and the Jehovah Witness to name a few. This exposure allowed me to learn many different rules and customs in each of these religious cultures.

Intense involvement and participation in any individual religions was not a part of how I learned. However, it was through observation of the actions and activities of my parents and others from the sidelines. The only religious customs and practices I was allowed to participate in was Catholicism. However, there was a hunger in me to know more and I learned all of the different religious practices and customs of each religion. I was not allowed to participate in the religious ceremonies that were held by her parents, but helped in the ceremonial preparation leading up to each of the actual ceremonial celebration. I felt uncomfortable, a sense of not belonging or being a part of my family. This unfavorable religious experience at home created turmoil in my young life, filling me with hurt and pain and much like an outsider.

The Preparation

After graduating from high school, I left the small village of Cedros, and moved into the city. I relocated to a city called San Fernando, in south Trinidad where I operated a small retail business. Catholicism remains my true form of worship and I continued to observe its culture and practices as part of the lifestyle and culture in which I was born and raised. After many years on my own in the city, I migrated to the United States of America.

My first place of residence was Providence, Rhode Island. While in Providence, knowledge, experience, and exposure to other religions and their cultures was part of my spiritual awakening that there was something more. A few of my new experiences were in the Baptist, Methodists, and the Mormon religious cultures.

In Providence, Rhode Island, I met Jesus Christ through the “Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints Church.” I rededicated my life to Christ and began a new walk. I was taught and learned about Christ in the Mormon religious traditions and customs. I felt comfortable and at home. For, the first time in my life, I felt as if I belonged somewhere, but, this feeling did not last long. I moved to Florida and my experiences within the Mormon Church in Florida were not the same. A greater feeling of loss, and being uncomfortable began in me and the changes affected me to the point that I no longer felt that this was the place I belonged.

I left the Mormon Church and went back to Catholicism, because this was what I had known and it was the religion in which I was raised. However, I quickly found out that this was not where I belonged either. I felt uncomfortable and lost, as if something was missing from my life and the search began again. The search was to find what seemed to be missing and a place to feel at home, a place where I belonged and felt loved. I visited many churches, for example, The Church of God in Christ, Seven Day Adventist, Jehovah Witness, Pentecostal, The African Methodist Episcopal Church, and other nondenominational churches.

It was during this search, when I followed my children to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC). My kids attended service with a neighbor whom we all respected and love and whom the kids considered their grandmother. My kids loved this

church and I felt compelled to visit and see for myself what my children loved so much about the church. While visiting the AMEC with my children, I became actively involved in ministry work with youths and in other areas of the church. I did not desire to become a member; because the message that was being preached was not an inclusive message. It was more of a racial bias dealing with Africans and Blacks. I felt that since I was not Black or African, I was not included in the message.

However, God had other plans for me. I had made many close friends within the church and after attending and working in the church for a few years, one Sunday morning after the preacher had finished preaching and the doors of the church were opened, for those persons who wanted to become a part of the church, and for new converts to give their lives to Christ. I found myself joining the church I had promised I was not going to be a part of.

While attending the African Methodist Episcopal Church, I tried to find ways to tell the preacher to change the message from a Black bias to an inclusive message. To use this as a way to encourage people from different racial backgrounds and groups to attend the church. In studying the Bible, it taught that God created all people in His own image and likeness. God loves people of all colors and races. Why then, was the church of God preaching a message of blackness and not inclusiveness? The desire for the church to be opened and available to people of all races and color, to see growth and exposure for others and those within the church grew within me. The church changed pastors several times and it was my hope that the church would refocus their message to be inclusive.

Under the leadership of one particular pastor, who was a native of one of the island in the West Indies, the message being preached changed and became inclusive.

The church began to grow and then I felt this was where God wanted me to continue to work in ministry. The experiences at the AMEC were broad, working in many areas of the local and district church. I was naïve in many ways and trusted the people that I cared about, without reservations. During my period at the AMEC, I became a victim of church hurt and disappointment at the hands of the same people whom I had loved and trusted. My hurt was financially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

In a recognized moved from God, I left Florida, and moved to Georgia. My intention was not to get involved with any church again. I had vowed and made a promise to myself not to get involved with another church, because, of the hurt, humiliation, and the pain inflicted by those who called themselves Christians, and godly people. If, that was the behaviors and habits of godly people, I did not want to be a part of it. But, my loved for the Lord did not allow me to do that, it was stronger than the hurt or the pain. Feeling empty, lost and that something seems to be missing from my life, I started visiting many churches in Georgia, but could not find one where I felt at home. Then, a friend told me about a Trinidadian pastor of an AMEC in Marietta, Georgia. I decided to visit the church and found myself joining the church the very first day I visited.

I got involved working within the church and continued my journey with God. During my time at Turner Chapel AMEC, I was able to accept the knowledge that God was calling me into ministry. Under the leadership and guidance of my beloved pastor, I accepted my call in ministry to preach and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The decision was very difficult for me because of my cultural background and the way I was raised. I did not take the call to ministry lightly and committed myself to serving the Lord.

I learned more about the operations of the AMEC. The more I learned about the politics of the church, the less I liked it. As part of my training and preparation for work in ministry, I was sent to assist a pastor of another church. I worked alongside this pastor for three years in many areas of the church and continued to work and learn all that was taught by the elders and leaders of the church. Yet, I never felt the sense of belonging or a part of the organization. After three years of serving alongside with the pastor of the other church, I returned to Turner Chapel AMEC.

Returning to Turner where my education and training for the work of ministry continued, there was still the sense of being lost or missing something which was overwhelming me along with feelings of no longer being at home. I started visiting churches of the many friends I had made along the way in ministry. One of my closest friends was a pastor of a church in the Spiritual Baptist Faith that is rooted in Trinidad. The customs and rituals of this faith fascinated me and since this was a church from the island where I was birthed and raised, I thought it must be where God wanted me. Surely, the sense of home and comfort would be felt amongst my own island people. Whenever, I could go to visit my friend's church I did, but did not leave the AMEC.

It was a divine appointment when an introduction to Keith Lawrence was made to me. Lawrence, another AMEC pastor from Trinidad who is the friend of my spiritual leader and father in ministry, and I became friends. We shared a kindred spirit, because he is from my homeland. Recognizing the moved of God in my life throughout the course of life's journey, it is my belief that it was God's divine plan in the works when He allowed Lawrence and me to be introduced and become friends.

Lawrence experienced a horrific and very difficult time in his ministry in the AMEC. During this time, he shared his vision about a new ministry God had given him. As a friend I, emphasized, promised, and offered him my support. The first day of worship dawned at the new ministry; I went to plant a seed and support my friend in his new ministry to fulfill the promise I had made to him. After an awesome worship service, as I was about to leave the church, which was held in a high school band room, the Holy Spirit convicted me and told me that this was where God needed me to be. This was where God was giving me a new assignment. I resisted, but was obedient and did as I was instructed to do by the Holy Spirit; I joined and became a partner with Global EmPOWERment Ministries, to do Kingdom work.

Even though I was obedient, I still resisted, because I had to be sure that it was God speaking to me and not my own desire. I inhabit a Gideon spirit sometimes and wanted God to show me that it was God at work in my life, and that this was really where God truly wanted me to be in ministry. My visitations continued with my friend at the Spiritual Baptist Church where I assisted in many areas of her ministry, but I still felt something was missing and never felt comfortable. For a couple of years, I attended worship service at both churches, yet still continued to feel that sense of not belonging or as part of the family. One day, I felt the Holy Spirit telling me that I must not be divided in my work in ministry, but must fully commit to the place where I was appointed and placed. After many signs of confirmation from God, I yielded my loyalty and commitment to my appointed place for the work of ministry, Global EmPOWERment Ministries.

This move of God was viewed as preparation for my real position in ministry. There are many days where the doubts and challenges still rise in my face, but my promise is to go where He leads. My experiences at GEM are not all roses, there are thorns as well, but perseverance is the name of my inner strength, and to continue to conquer my trials and challenges is the game. Many times the feelings of being out of place or the sense of not belonging would overcome me, but I continued to stand and stay. My strong belief and trust in God is what holds me at GEM where He has placed and appointed me for work in His Kingdom. Obedience to the Holy Spirit and doing whatever is asked of me in service for the Kingdom of God is what my service to Him is about for this time, because, when God want me to leave, God would tell me.

During my transition from the AMEC to GEM, I was attending school to get a bachelor's degree. I fulfilled that accomplishment and experience another move by God, which compelled me to continue on to a master's degree. My testimony is that five days before the master's program was schedule to begin, and two days before the program actually started, I was accepted. In three days, the application, references, and an essay into the recruitment office of the university was required and done. The acceptance into the masters program at Shorter University started on the following Monday. As part of my testimony, I did not have financial aid or any of the financial paperwork done or approved, but I got in and started classes on the scheduled day and time. This was God preparation of me for ministry.

Vision of Context in Ministry

Obedience to God, kept me at GEM even though my feeling were that this was not the place for me. Tests, challenges, and trials came through many channels, but

perseverance held out. On the verge of leaving many times, but not wanting to be disobedient to the command from God, I continued with my education and held on. I was getting ready to do research for my master's thesis, when the Lord spoke to my heart. The discovery was made within me that it was important to find out why people were joining the church, especially GEM and leaving after a few months.

Research and Acceptance of Context in Ministry

The research into this problem began and the results revealed that many religious leaders were aware of their membership retention issue within their particular religious organization. The hypothesis was: the relationships between satisfaction with attributes of worship, church characteristics, and church member characteristics, including members' intention to leave their particular religious organization. The discovery was that church leaders and their leadership team in their religious organization must be able to design strategic plans with the objective and focus to address deficiencies in the theoretical and empirical literature regarding disciple making and membership retention, including their intention to leave the church. Church leaders and administrators must understand the factors that affect members and their intent to leave the church in the decline of membership in Christian religious organizations.

In the research, the information that was found was very important in recognizing the problem. According to the research, "It is estimated that 33 percent of the world's population is a member of a Christian religion."¹ It is projected that membership percentage will fall by approximately 15.4 percent by 2020. In the mid 1960s, membership in mainline tradition of the Protestant denomination continued to decline

¹Scarlet Surveys, (2011), accessed May 2013, <http://www.scarlettsurveys.com>.

steadily, particularly in the United States.² Studies conducted by the same group showed religious organizations and churches have not kept pace with the population growth. Each year approximately three percent of the population is lost to competition. Globalization of religious pluralism has a strong negative impact on the membership growth rate in churches. This decline in membership has created the need for membership retention strategies and plans in churches.³

The research found evidence to justify the study of the issue. The research studies showed the issue to be similar, if not the same in many churches. In research, done through the Barna research group, the issue was the same for church leaders and administrators. Many leaders of religious organizations agreed that if they could just keep the people who join their churches, then, their attendance would be twice as high. The question they ask themselves is, “what is the secret to retention?” “Are there some type of processes that can be implemented that may be able to close the back door and retain the members”?⁴ According to the Barna Research Group, church attendance in the United States has remained stable over the past years.⁵ But, according to other research and surveys done by Lifeway Christian Resources 2010, there is a growing decline in the Christian faith in the U.S.

²Gallup.com *Religious and Social Trends*, accessed June 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/15085/Exploring-Rise-Congregational-EngagementPart.aspx>.

³G. Yancey, R. K. Rogers, J. Singletary, & M. Sherr, (2009), “A National Study Of Administrative Practices In Religious Organizations,” *Social Work and Christianity*, 36(2), 127-142, accessed June 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/230161619?accountid>.

⁴Christianity in America, (1995), *The Futurist*, 29(4), 55-55, accessed June 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/218544009?accountid=13843>.

⁵Ibid.

It was discovered in a survey done between the years of 1992-1995, by the Barna group, Bible reading outside the church was very low. It has fallen from 47 percent in previous years to 31 percent. Church school attendance has also shown a tremendous decline. There have been no significant changes in church attendance, church volunteerism, belief in specific Christian doctrines, proportion of adults who are born-again Christians, proportion who are evangelical Christians and the percentage who embrace a biblical definition of God.

The facts revealed are frightening. There is proof in this research that Christianity is at a critical crossroads especially in America. Millions of adults are frantically searching for something to believe in, values to live by, and for relationships that make life worthwhile. Christian churches in America spent more than \$40 billion on domestic ministry in 2005, and not much new ground was gained. The next several years will determine the vitality of the Christian faith in this nation for the next several decades. The problem is the evident decline in the level of retention and engagement within religious organization that seems to start with leadership and filters down through the hierarchal levels.⁶

The research discovered that the disciple making could be an important factor in the degree of engagement and retention within the religious organization. A leader's style of leadership can encourage or discourage members' engagement and therefore, affect the retention of its members. The research indicated that transformational leaders, combined with spiritual leaders are an offshoot of transformational leadership, and it is a particular

⁶G. Yukl & David D. Van Fleet, 2002. "Theory And Research On Leadership In Organization," *Leadership in Organization* 2 (3): 147-197, accessed June 2013, PsycINFO database.

style of leadership that is considered the most appropriate style for this type of religious organizational problem.⁷

Exploring the connection between disciple-making, styles of leadership and members' engagement and retention may prove beneficial to religious organizations. The phenomenon of membership engagement and retention within a particular religious organization may reveal information, on how discipleship, leadership styles and other factors influence engagement and retention. This information can work to the advantage of religious organizations where the problem of engagement and retention exist.⁸

For the majority of my adult life, God was preparing me for my context in ministry. There was never a place where it felt like home, the sense of belonging or where I felt completely comfortable. Every religious change that was made by me brought a period of comfort, which never lasted. Under the guidance of my spiritual coach and lead pastor of GEM, the application to United Theological Seminary into the doctoral program for this project was made. The acceptance into the program would later reveal that it was only because of God's plan and His divine appointment that the acceptance was granted and I was entered into the program. The discovery was, this was the area where I must work, to strengthen, and build.

The first assignment was to write a spiritual biography. In writing the spiritual biography, recognition of a few common themes in my writings came about. One of them was the fact that I never felt I belonged or at home in any of the previous religious

⁷K. Purser, 2003, In Vandermark M. (Ed.), *Ministry Leadership in Puget Sound Church Of Christ*. United States—Arizona: University of Phoenix, accessed June 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/305243691?accountid=13843>.

⁸A. L. Winseman, *Congregational Membership on the Decline: Religious and Social Trends* (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2002).

organization. Also, I was never comfortable in any one particular religious organization. This appeared to be the dominant factor in my movement from church to church and from religion to religion. It is my belief that God was calling me to work in this area of ministry. The challenge is to create an atmosphere where new converts, and believers will always be made comfortable and feel at home at GEM.

The motivation that drives me through life is my love for people and relationships. The spiritual gifts and strengths that GEM and I offer each other is our need to connect people and build bonds that bind people together. Very often my sacrifice of personal time, effort, and convenience is given to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with others. Opportunities to get people to genuinely connect with each other are the motivation and desire. Everything that is done by me must be and has to be quality based and done in excellence.

I know that I am incredibly loyal to family and friends. I considered people of the religious organization that I am a part of a part of my extended family, and will go to the extreme measures to make sure they are nurtured. I am analytical, compassionate, committed, dedicated, dependable, loyal, sincere, respectful, thoughtful, nurturing, and seek to give quality care to others. These qualities will help me in the challenges I may encounter with others in implementing strategic ways to make disciples at GEM.

A place to call home, a place where I feel I belong, a place where I have connected with a family and a pastor whose heart for God and the work that God wants him to do is wrapped in the concept of inclusiveness. My view is that God, who is all-knowing and wise, allowed me to experience undesirable situations and circumstances to bring me to this special place and ministry where God would use me as a transformative

force. My unfavorable experiences of discomfort within each religious organization I attended created and formed the basis for the need to create strategic plans and implement them so that discipleship can be stabilized and retained within this particular religious organization known as GEM.

The problem statement for this project is the absence of care and leadership involvement in disciple making and the retention of members/partners within a particular religious organization. This project will allow church leaders and their leadership team to create opportunities for member/partners to become engaged. It will assist in the development of the necessary tools to assess, discern, follow, and meet the needs of the people within the congregation. It will encourage and maintain current membership/partnerships and create avenues for growth as God uses the ministry to build stronger foundations in the work for the Kingdom. This project will also demonstrate how God graciously transition leaders to recognize the needs of their congregation and how those needs can be met as a new ministry context without destroying and damaging congregations and members/partners who seek to work in building up and strengthening believers in the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The proposed working title for this project is: Disciple Making: A Strategic Method Of Increasing And Maintaining Congregational Growth And Vitality In The 21st Century Church.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

John Wesley implemented a system call the class system that lends its ideas to this process for increasing and maintaining membership/partnership retention. The class system involved using one member/partner to be the class leader and assigning the other members/partners to each class leader incorporating all new converts and new members/partners within the class system of fellowship immediately.¹ John Wesley's idea behind the class system was to get the believers in the body of Christ to come together for fellowship, and study weekly, with specific objectives and goals that will lead the believers to grow in the things of God and fellowship with one another.²

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 reads,

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to the one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone. And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.³

Being part of a community of Christian believers is an incredible blessing, and there are many opportunities to connect with others. Small groups are an important part within the wider body of the congregation. Building relationships within the body of

¹D. Michael Henderson, *A Model for Making Class Disciples: John Wesley's Class Meetings* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1997).

²Ibid., 14-20.

³Rom 12: 4 (NRSV).

believers strengthens and unifies the body. A united congregation is a strong congregation and in strength and unity more can be accomplished.

Key Elements

In the book, *Building a Church of Small Groups*, authors Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson state that a true community has four key elements. These are providing strength for life's storms, wisdom for decision-making, accountability for spiritual growth, and acceptance.⁴ John Wesley in his task to accomplish a true community of worshippers, taught that these elements are express within a variety of groups offering opportunities to serve and learn, including the opportunities to experience fellowship and accountability. There are more than two pages in the Wesleyan Lay Leadership roster that attest to the abundance and the availability groups.⁵

According to Henderson, church membership was not the placement of a name on a roll; the clear expectation was that the member was to make a difference through the ministries of the church. Giving was not touted as optional but expected among church members. And membership or inquirer classes were often the place where these expectations were most clearly articulated.⁶ Ministry involvement is a crucial part of the growth of membership/partnership within a congregation. If church members/partners do not become meaningfully involved in some type of ministry in the church, the chances increase dramatically for those persons to drop out. Church leadership cannot delay in

⁴⁰Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups: A Place Where Nobody Stands Alone* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 38.

⁵Ibid., 38-40.

⁶Henderson, *A Model for Making Class Disciples*, 40.

moving new members to places of ministry. If more than six months lapses between the points of new membership to ministry involvement, the person will likely be already moving toward inactivity in the life of the church.⁷

Strategic Plans

Building relationships is very important in the growth of a church. According to Thom Rainer, “What church leaders do not realize is that the development of these relationships with new members/partners best takes place before the member/partner joins.”⁸ When new member/partner has no relationship within a church when they join the church, it is exceedingly difficult to create relationships. This is the reason why it is critically important for the already existing church members/partners to become highly intentional about developing relationships with new persons before they visit the church.⁹

Small groups can incorporate many different areas of ministry in the church for members/partners to become actively involve. Some of the small-group ministries are that the new members/partners can actively participate in are: discipleship groups, home cell groups, ministry teams, church at study, choirs and praise teams, just to name a few.¹⁰

According to research conducted on small-groups, it has shown that the most effective assimilation group is the Sunday school, which is an open-ended small group that typically meets on the church campus every Sunday morning before worship. The

⁷Ibid., 22.

⁸Thom Rainer, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process For Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011).

⁹Ibid., 14-20.

¹⁰Donahue and Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*.

study showed that a person involved in a Sunday school class is five times more likely to be active in the church five years later, than a person who attends worship services alone.¹¹

Many articles found in Christian churches and denominations within the body of Christ have a common commitment to watch over and care for other believers and members/partners of the same religious organization. This applies to active members/partners, who operate and serve in the ministries of the local church. It also applies to members/partners that have left the church, inactive members/partners, and members/partners who have fallen prey to what is known as church hopping. They go from church to church never finding the right church home or the correct fit.

The church today, needs this type of actions and behaviors in order to effectively deal with the problem of church hopping.¹² Church hopping, is the concept of people leaving one church where they do not find acceptance, think they do not fit, the doctrine that is preached is hard for them to find accept and generally feel like they are lost and unwanted.¹³ It is important for leaders to remember that in this dispensation and age of modern technology that most people have at the very least, heard of Christianity and of Christ the Savior of humankind. Therefore, when most people come to the church building it is more than likely that they are coming to fellowship with believers, either as a visitor or a new convert. Their desire might be to be among people who are of the same mindset as they are, or to be a part of the fellowship of the body of Christ.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Urban Dictionary, "Small Groups," accessed May 7, 2013, www.urbandictionary.com.

¹³Donahue and Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*.

Responsibilities

The responsibility of keeping the members/partners connected does not fall on the pastor. It is the responsibility of the existing church members/partners who have been with the church to watch over, provide, guide, exhort, guard, and participate in the lives of each member/partner. This responsibility extends to all members/partners, those who have been with the church for a while, those who have left, and those who have just joined the church.¹⁴ Many people leave the church because of the clicks and the attitude of the people who have been there longer than them. A new member/partner who encounters this atmosphere and the barriers it creates will find it difficult to fit.

The battle to find a place within the body of Christ in an atmosphere where there are these barriers can be extremely difficult. Many people would choose to leave and go somewhere else.¹⁵ On the other hand, some people believe that when they joined the church they can do whatever they want. However, when they discover that they cannot, that everything in God's house must be done in decency and order, they choose to leave. Then, there are others who come in supposedly on fire for God and are put through a process. If the process seems to be taking too long they leave.¹⁶ These are persons who do not want to invest the time it takes to learn, or to do the work that is required.

Today's generation has become a society of people who wants everything instantly. Technology has turned us into a people that lack patience; Microwave, IM, Skype, YouTube, FaceBook, FaceTime and Tango have made us into society where

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

people can see and do almost anything instantly. It is important for the church to keep up with the growing trends and fast pace of society. Therefore, it is imperative to provide the right atmosphere, teachings and support as a church to equip this generation with strength to face life's storms, and give them the necessary tools to make wise decisions. Doing this will enable and allow this fast pace generation to be independent, yet acquire the knowledge for spiritual growth. Then, they will feel accepted into the body of believers by the others believers that are senior graduates of the body of Christ or the church congregation.

Historical/Biblical Teachings

The book of Acts shows the example of how the early church was established. The church body grew because of the life that Jesus exemplified; the apostles were witnesses and taught the early church the practices and culture of Christianity. The body was filled with the love of Jesus Christ and demonstrated this by their actions. They cared for each other and met the needs of the people.¹⁷ Teaching the people the ways of The Lord, the characteristics of discipleship and meeting the needs of the people, demonstrated the behaviors of the believers in the early church. Many of the wealthy believers sold their possessions and gave the earnings to the early church, so that believers who were poor, widows and many others could be cared for. In our churches today there are many who go without their basic needs being met. The churches are barely able to take care of their own needs and obligations, partly due to the economic downturn in the country, and partly because of the decline in membership/partnership

¹⁷Acts (NRSV).

and decline in their own finances. People come to the churches to get help, but many are not even a part of the body of Christ. Churches always try to help all that come needing help, however, there are a few who do not need help and come to scam the churches, because they know that churches help those in need.

Retention Strategies

McIntosh provided some insights and strategies for retaining partners/members. Building friendships, forming relationships, participation, small groups, discipleship, and spiritual development were the methods that were being used to retain and grow the church membership/partnership.¹⁸ The leaders in this religious organization had adopted the Jesus Model for ministry, which is discipleship and meeting the needs of the people. This will incorporate all of the aforementioned. The church desires to keep its partnership/membership and it is essential that they feel that they are a part of the body and an integral part of the church. Considerable research has suggested that many members/partners do not feel that sense of belonging, or that sense of coming home.

There are many reasons why people join the church, but one of the most important reasons is for the purpose of belonging. The desire for most if not all people are to find a place where they can find genuine fellowship and a sense of home. In his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren states, "As Christians we are called to belong, not just believe. We are not meant to live lone ranger lives; instead, we are to belong to the body of Christ's family, and be members of his body. Baptism is not only a symbol of salvation; it is a symbol of fellowship. It symbolizes our new life in Christ and visualizes a person's incorporation into the body of Christ. It says that this new

¹⁸Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church For Growth: Building Team Ministry For the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).

member/partner is now one of us." Warren book gave us a look at why members/partners leave and why they stay. Those stay because they feel welcomed, loved, a part of the church, and are comfortable. Those that leave feel uncomfortable because they feel unwelcome, unloved, and are not a part of the church.¹⁹

Research have uncovered that many new members/partners having been received into membership/partnership have never felt that they have been accepted into the fellowship circle; therefore, they do not feel as part of the church so they leave. It is necessary that here the emphasis must be placed on building friendship and developing relationship with new members/partners.²⁰ Emphasis should be placed on friendliness and motivating the members/partners to welcome the new members/partners into the fellowship.

When new members/partners feel that they are not really part of the church, there will be an increase in members/partners decline. In Romans, Paul is talking to the Christians who were the members of the churches in Rome. Paul's letter was discussing Christianity and lifestyles. People beliefs determine their behaviors.²¹ We must make our Christian walk a lifestyle choice. The keys to a successful demonstration of our relationship with God are for humankind/believers to make Christianity a part of their living. Showing each other how to live the life we have been called to live, through daily lifestyle choices and actions that affirm our trust in God's Word.

¹⁹Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Every Church is Big in God Eyes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1995).

²⁰Ibid., 42.

²¹Rom (NRSV).

Finding and understanding what a new member/partner needs in the church can often be perplexing. Each member/partner comes to the church seeking something different. Getting them involved is the responsibility of everyone from the pulpit to the greeter; each must work in unison for the entire body to prosper. There should not be no big I's and little U's in the body of Christ, because, Jesus walk among lepers and associated with prostitutes. Therefore, as his followers and believers it should be expected for us to do the same. Believers need to open our hearts and minds to each and every person, regardless of what they are seeking when they come through the doors of the church.

In every church each person has something to add that can make a difference in the life of another. Creating a partnership for each person within the congregation and for each person that joins the congregation creates a degree of accountability within body of Christ or the church. The right partnership/membership is essential to the church and important for placement into their area of expertise. Giving people the opportunity to work in their area of expertise and to do the things they love will create the cohesiveness, which is needed in the art of bonding each other together which helps in member/partner retention.

Leaders and Members/Partners Participation

It is critical for the leaders to form strategic plans to include everyone in the congregation of the church. Strategic plans must include finding the right place where every part of the body can function effectively. Therefore, it is important for the eyes to know their purposes and functions, so that when new eyes come into the fellowship they can be identified and be guided to the correct placement. Correct placement allows them

to work effectively in their gifted areas knowing their purposes and their functions in the body. Each part of the body needs each other to function effectively. Each part of the body has its own function and plays a role in the health and life of the body. When one part is not functioning at its full capacity or working effectively, then the whole body is affected. Many times when one part of the body is not functioning effectively it can have a domino effect on the other parts, which can cause many other parts to become dysfunctional or have problems.

The leaders and their leadership team in this particular context already have strategic plans in operation to demonstrate their commitment to this growing problem of membership/partnership disengagement and retention in this religious organization. The leadership and the team have shown their commitment by empowering members/partners, and involving the congregation in the initiatives.²² Determining the needs of the people and meeting those needs are one part of the strategic plans for retention. Another part is determining the reasons why people do not come to church. And yet, another part is what are some the reasons that some people leave the church.²³

The involvement of the leaders, their team and the entire congregation in these strategic plans will what ensure that everyone is on the same playing field. This strategy involves everyone in this context to invest in the life of the church. This will encourage members/partners to step up to the areas they excel, and also encourage many to stretch and move out of their comfort zone.²⁴ Empowered members/partners take charge, gain control of situations that arises, find, and adopt solutions with quick actions. Control is a

²²Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*.

²³Ibid., 45.

²⁴McIntosh, *Staff Your Church For Growth*.

critical component of members/partners engagement. Control allows the members/partners to participate and determine their destinies.²⁵ It also initiates other concepts to fall into place more easily when members/partners are empowered. An empowered congregation can create an invigorating culture where members/partners participate in the entire growth of the congregation.²⁶

Members/partners then, are more likely to be engaged and less likely to become frustrated or leave. To organize and create fully engaged members/partners, the involvement of the entire congregation is a necessary part of the solution. Each spiritual leader and their team along with their small groups must be responsible for creating opportunities for engagement and identifying those members/partners of the congregation who are disengaged. The overwhelming importance of establishing the role of the small groups in developing an engaged, congregation has been proven in the historical research of this topic.²⁷

Engaged members/partners who are fully engaged also knows that the importance of retaining new members/partners and supports the strategic plans and initiatives towards the overall goals of the ministry. Providing gifts and talents that are needed to fulfill the mission, vision, and the purpose of the church will become easy and routine for them.²⁸ It will also unite the entire congregation in their efforts of retaining members/partners so that the plans will be effective and successful. It will highlight the

²⁵Ibid., 23.

²⁶McIntosh, *Staff Your Church For Growth*.

²⁷Albert L. Winseman, *Growing An Engaged Church: How To Stop Doing Church And Start Being The Church Again* (New York, NY: The Gallup Press, 2006).

²⁸Ibid., 35.

importance of core values and practices within this particular religious organization, which is also essential in the engagement of the entire congregation support for membership/partnership retention.²⁹

Members/partners who embrace these core values and practices are those who continually live out these values in all they do and say, which impacts the lives of others around them and other members/partners of their congregations.³⁰ Leaders, members/partners who take the lead by communicating the mission, vision and purpose of the church and making it evident in their actions will motivate members/partners to become actively involved in the engagement of members/partners and this will grow the church in members/partners retention.

²⁹Ibid., 40.

³⁰Winseman, *Growing An Engaged Church*.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATIONS

Biblical Foundations

Old Testament

The story of the book of Exodus tells of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. The word, exodus is derived from a Greek word meaning going out.¹ Hundreds of years elapsed between the time of the events described in the closing chapters of Genesis and those of the beginning of Exodus. The exact number of years between the migration of Jacob into Egypt until the exodus is given as 430 (Exodus 12:40-41). At the end of the book of Genesis, the Israelites were living in the fertile land of Goshen and were being fed from the granaries of the Pharaoh of Egypt. In the beginning of the book of Exodus the Israelites are seen as slaves of the Egyptians, a nation without a country or a national unawareness of their calling from God. Exodus shows the development of Israel and the birth of a real nation, and the promises of God to Abraham begin to unfold.²

Up until this point in history, leadership was decided mostly by one's age and birth sequence. The firstborn and/or eldest were most often the leader. Even before God would formally give His written Word in the form of the first five books of the Bible through Moses, God established a system of leadership rooted in discipleship. The

¹The Book of Exodus, accessed March 3, 2013, <http://www.bible-history.com/old-testament/bookofexodus.html>.

²Ibid.

measure of its success was the degree to which all its participants at every level put into practice God's Word.

The ideal form of discipleship for Israel was the nation in covenantal relationship with God. That ideal is richly expressed in the prophets as they look ahead to the time when Israel would have the ultimate realization of that relationship. Isaiah expresses the personal nature of this relationship in the prophecies of the new covenant (Is 30:20-21; 31:31-34).³ When giving the Law to Israel in the wilderness, God stressed his covenant intent and the nation was called to a relationship in which God was with his people.

God's relationship to man has been defined by specific requirements and promises. God tells people how he wants them to act and also makes promises about how he will act toward them in various circumstances. The Bible contains several summaries of the provisions that define the different relationships between God and man that occur in scripture, and it often calls these summaries covenants. With respect to covenants between God and man in scripture, we may give the following definition: A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.⁴

Although this definition includes the word agreement in order to show that there are two parties, God and man, who must enter into the provisions of the relationship, the phrase divinely imposed is also included to show that man can never negotiate with God or change the terms of the covenant: he can only accept the covenant obligations or reject them. Probably for this reason the Greek translators of the Old Testament (known as the Septuagint), and, following them, the New Testament authors, did not use the ordinary Greek word for contracts or agreements in which both parties were equal but rather chose a less common word, διαθήκη, which emphasized that the provisions of the covenant were laid

³Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996).

⁴"The Covenants Between God and Man," accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/covenants.html>.

down by one of the parties only. (In fact, the word διαθήκη was often used to refer to a testament or will that a person would leave to assign the distribution of his or her goods after death.)

This definition also notes that covenants are unchangeable. They may be superseded or replaced by a different covenant, but they may not be changed once they are established. Although there have been many additional details specified in the covenants God has made with man throughout the history of scripture, the essential element at the heart of all of them is the promise, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 6:16; et al.).⁵

Moses had the responsibility of moving the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. It was only a short journey from Egypt to Canaan by the most direct route. A splendid highway ran up the coast through the country of the Philistines and the distance was not over 250 miles, or about a month’s journey. Because of their lack of faith, the children of Israel were not prepared to make the journey by the shortest route. “Had they attempted to pass through Philistia, their progress would have been opposed; for the Philistines, regarding them as slaves escaping from their masters, would not have hesitated to make war on them. The Israelites were poorly prepared for an encounter with a powerful and warlike people. They had little knowledge of God and little faith in Him, and they would have become terrified and disheartened.”⁶

The Lord never intended that there would be such a long delay and that the short journey should require more than forty years. “It was not His good pleasure that they should wander so long in the wilderness. He would have brought them immediately to the

⁵Ibid.

⁶The Gospel Herald, “The Journey From Egypt,” accessed March 6, 2013, [http:// www.gospel-herald.com/t_bunch/eam/eam_ch16.htm](http://www.gospel-herald.com/t_bunch/eam/eam_ch16.htm).

Promised Land, had they submitted, and loved to be led by Him; but because they so often grieved Him in the desert, He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, save two who wholly followed Him.”⁷

The Lord never intended that Israel should fight their way into the Promised Land or conquer it by warfare. The victory was to be theirs by faith. He promised to fight their battles for them and to drive out the inhabitants of the Promised Land with hornets, hailstones, and plagues. (Ex 23:27, 28).⁸ However, because of their lack of faith and disobedience, the Israelites had to learn how to trust God in the school of affliction and experience, before they could be given possession of the Promised Land. The varied experience of the Hebrews was a school of preparation for their promised home in Canaan. God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan. It was to teach them the needed lessons of faith and trust in His leadership that the Lord led them in a circuitous route by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.⁹

When the journey to Canaan reaches the place where God gives Moses and the Israelites victory over the Amalekites, a critical shift occurred regarding how the Israelites were to be governed. It is in this section of the story that a lesson in discipleship takes shape (Ex 18:13-26). It is this lesson in discipleship that we will focus on.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

According to the biblical text, after the victory over the Amalekites, his father-in-law Jethro who observed Moses attempting to govern all the people by himself visited Moses. From Jethro's observations it was clear that the task of leadership was too great for one person. From the journey to the Promised Land, we are also told that the Israelites were disobedient, had little faith, and did not trust in God. It is from this position that the leadership style of Moses was brought into question.

In order to understand how the work of Jethro created a sense of discipleship, we must first understand its biblical implications. During Jesus' earthly ministry, and during the days of the early church, the term that was used most frequently to designate one of Jesus' followers was disciple (*mathētēs*, 262 times).¹⁰ Hence, discipleship is a central theological theme of the Gospels and Acts. The situation is different in the Old Testament and in the rest of the New Testament. There is a curious scarcity of words for disciple in the Old Testament, and *mathētēs* does not occur at all in the Epistles and Revelation.¹¹ However, other terms and expressions point to abundant theological concepts of discipleship everywhere in scripture. Discipleship enjoys its most concrete expression in scripture when Jesus walked with his disciples during his earthly ministry. Yet the Old Testament prepares for that relationship, and the Epistles and Revelation describe how that relationship was carried out after Jesus' ascension.¹²

The roots of biblical discipleship go deep into the fertile soil of God's calling. That calling is expressed in the pattern of divine initiative and human response that

¹⁰Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996).

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

constitutes the heart of the biblical concept of covenant, manifested in the recurring promise, “I will be your God, and you shall be my people” (Lv 26:12). That call from Yahweh is reiterated in the call of Jesus, when he said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28). God has called his people to represent him on the earth, to be with him in every circumstance of life, to be transformed in personal character to be like him. That calling is at the heart of biblical discipleship, both in the Old and New Testaments.¹³

The ideal of discipleship in the Old Testament is the covenant relationship between Israel and God. Although the call came from God to individuals—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—it was directed toward their offspring (Gn 13:15). God was creating a national community that would be his people. In turn, his people were to be a source of blessing to all peoples of the earth (Gn 12:1–3). That calling was reiterated and confirmed in the exodus from Egypt and in the wilderness (Ex 13:21–22). No other person or god was to take a place of preeminence and thus usurp God. While God placed men and women in leadership roles (e.g., Moses, Joshua, the judges, prophets), they were only intermediate leaders. God alone was to have the place of preeminence.¹⁴

When giving the Law to Israel in the wilderness, God stressed his covenant intent: “I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people” (Lv 26:12). The nation was called to a relationship in which God was with his people.

The Old Testament theme of God with his people finds explicit fulfillment in Jesus with his people. The relationship established between God and Israel was a divine-human relationship that anticipated the relationship to which Jesus would call his

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

followers. To fulfill the covenantal relationship means simply that God must be God, giving him preeminence in all things. The abstract covenantal relationship with God finds concrete expression in following God and walking in his ways. When the nation fulfills its commitment to the covenant it is said to be following God (e.g., Dt 4:1–14; 1 Sm 12:14) and walking in his ways (Dt 10:12–13). When the nation violated the covenant, it is said to be following the gods of the heathen and walking in their ways (Dt 6:14; Jgs 2:10–13; Is 65:2). Elijah calls to the people of Israel and says, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (1Kgs 18:21). Following God is understood in a metaphorical sense of walking in the ways of God.

Hence, the problem; the exodus was a demonstration of God’s great power and favor over the Pharaoh’s of Egypt. However, God’s chosen people had not reached a place in their own development to put their trust in the very person who was making provisions for their release and future abundant life. Because of a lack of faith and trust in God, Moses found himself constantly trying to lead a people who were wayward in every sense of the word.

Exodus 18:13-26 is the story of the meeting of Moses and Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law. This story has several interpretations but each lends itself to how discipleship was present in the Old Testament. Moses could have taken a week off, enjoyed his family, and entertained his father-in-law after their recent victory over the Amalekites, but being a faithful shepherd, he was back the next day helping his people with their problems.

The nation already had elders (v. 13; 4:29), but they were not assisting Moses in the day-by-day affairs of the camp, or if they were, there were matters they could not

settle that had to go to Moses. There were basic regulations for the management of the camp (Ex 18:16), since two million people could not very well live together and travel together without obeying some kind of code. The phrase “statutes and laws” in verse 16 can refer to the will of God in general as well as to specific ordinances from the Lord. Long before the Law was given, God blessed Abraham for obeying His commandments, statutes, and laws (Gn 26:5).¹⁵

Judicial codes are necessary for order and security in society, but they always have to be interpreted, even if they come from the Lord. Later, the priests would assist in this task (Mal 2:4–7); but the priesthood had not yet been established. From the time of Ezra (Ez 7:10), the scribes became the students and interpreters of the Law. Since there was no written word during this time, the laws and covenant of God had to be learned and taught (disciple/discipleship). Based on the number of people making the journey to the Promised Land, it made making decisions based on the law and covenant very difficult for Moses since he was one of few who knew and interpreted the law.

Jethro knew that Moses’ leadership was crucial for the future success of Israel and that any activity that drained his energy or wasted his time was bound to hurt the nation. Also, he did not want his son-in-law to wear himself out and leave Zipporah a widow and his two grandsons without a father. No one man could minister personally to two million people and last very long. Even after the new arrangement had been established, Moses had to confess that the work was too much for him (Nm 11:14), so what must the burden

¹⁵Iain D. Campbell, *Opening up Exodus* Opening Up Commentary (Leominster, MA: Day One Publications, 2006), Logos edition.

have been like under the old system? The Hebrew word translated easier in Exodus 18:22 means to take cargo from a ship (“That will make your load lighter,” NIV).¹⁶

Jethro suggested that Moses should organize the camp so that every ten people had somebody to talk to about their civil problems. If a ruler of ten could not solve the problem, it could be referred to the ruler of fifty, then 100, and then 1,000. After that, it would be referred to Moses himself. D. L. Moody may have had this in mind when he said, “I would rather put ten men to work than do the work of ten men.”¹⁷ A system such as this would separate the simple problems from the more complex matters so that Moses would not be wasting his time on trivial matters. (If the people of Israel were anything like people today, everybody thought his or her problem was the most important!) The arrangement would also test the seriousness of the people, for not all of them would be willing to let the ruler “take their case to a higher court.”¹⁸

However, Jethro was not advising Moses to pass the buck. Instead, Moses was to teach the people the regulations, no doubt assisted by the chosen rulers, so they could make wise decisions. He was also to represent the people before God, which probably meant praying for them and seeking God’s direction in the difficult cases. Moses was God’s chosen leader, and nobody could take his place until his work was done, but he did not have to do all the work alone.¹⁹ Jethro did not command Moses to follow his orders. He urged Moses to talk to the Lord about the problem and obey whatever God said (v.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

23). Since Moses adopted his father-in-law's suggestion, he must have consulted the Lord and gotten God's approval.

Moses did not ask Jethro how to build the tabernacle or how to offer the sacrifices, because those matters were revealed to him from the Lord. But in matters of organization and management, God's people can learn from outsiders, for "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Lk 16:8). Of course, we never adopt a practice or policy until we understand the principle behind it and make sure it is in agreement with scripture (Js 3:13–18). The important thing about delegating responsibilities is that you have leaders who have ability and character, "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Ex 18:21). These qualifications remind us of the experience of the early church in finding people to assist the apostles and relieve them of lesser duties (Acts 6:1–7). These assistants had to have good reputations, be full of the Spirit and wisdom, and approved by the people.²⁰

According to Deuteronomy 1:9–18, Moses shared Jethro's counsel with the people, admitted his own weakness and weariness, and asked them to select leaders to assist him. They approved of the plan and selected the officers whom Moses then charged with the responsibilities of their offices. When Israel moved into the Promised Land, they appointed officers in each town to assist in the settling of cases (Ex 16:18–20). God is a God of order, and He wanted all of His people to enjoy security and justice in the camp and in the land.²¹

Whatever historical realities may be reflected in Jethro's counsel, our text in its present form and setting functions to show that Israel is beginning to settle down to an

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

ordered way of life. Earlier, Moses settled down in the household of Jethro (2:21–22). Jethro helps Israel establish a communal order that will make orderly and peaceful life possible for an indefinite time to come. When Moses sees his father-in-law off (18:27), Jethro leaves behind an Israel set for a peaceful, ordered existence in the freedom enjoyed by nomadic shepherd life. This, however, proves to be “the quiet before the storm.”²² It is also an indication that discipleship is an intentional process and not a one-time transaction.

New Testament

Matthew 28:19-20 contains what has come to be called the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Jesus gave this command to the apostles shortly before He ascended into heaven, and it essentially outlines what Jesus expected the apostles, and those who followed them, to do in His absence. It is interesting that in the original Greek, the only specific command in Matthew 28:19-20 is make disciples.²³

The Great Commission instructs us to make disciples while we are going through out the world and while we are going about our daily activities. The authorized method of making disciples was by baptizing them and teaching them all that Jesus commanded. Make disciples is the command of the Great Commission. Going, baptizing, and teaching

²²Waldemar Janzen, “Exodus,” *Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000).

²³GotQuestions.org? “What is the Great Commission?” accessed March 15, 2013, [http:// www.gotquestions.org/great-commission.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/great-commission.html).

are the means by which we fulfill the command to make disciples. Many understand Acts 1:8 as part of the Great Commission as well, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Great Commission is enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to be Christ's witnesses, fulfilling the Great Commission in our cities (Jerusalem), in our states and countries (Judea and Samaria), and anywhere else God sends us (to the ends of the earth).²⁴

In verse 17, we see that upon the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, confusion filled the air with doubt. In the case of the Eleven, this was neither the first occasion upon which they saw Jesus since the resurrection, nor yet the first impression. Judging from what follows it is believed that Matthew groups the eleven Apostles together with the Galilean believers who were also there. Therefore the statement: some doubted, is not applied to the reality of the Risen One, but is used in regard to what Matthew, the eleven and the Galileans saw.²⁵ The doubt was whether the person before them was really Jesus who had risen and whether it was proper to offer unto the Lord such an unbounded worship as was expressed in the supplications and prostration of the disciples.²⁶

The Great Commission passage is reminiscent of Acts 1:6–11. In Matthew, Jesus issued a similar commission in different words with a different emphasis. However, the setting in the Acts passage was in Jerusalem. It coincided with Jesus’ ascension into heaven at the end of the forty days. Jesus probably met with the disciples in Galilee and

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵John Peter Lange, and Philip Schaff, “Matthew,” *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*: (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008).

²⁶Ibid.

then instructed them to return to Jerusalem. All of this was done in preparation for their receiving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4–5) and their continuation of his Spirit-empowered ministry in Acts 2 (in Jerusalem).²⁷

Matthew did not record Jesus' ascension into heaven, as it likely would have distracted from his emphasis in 28:18–20. He wanted the Great Commission to linger in people's minds as they finished his Gospel. Jesus had a big job in mind for his followers. *All* is a key word in 28:18–20. It emphasizes Jesus' divine identity: all authority, all nations, all things. Before issuing his commission, Jesus laid the foundation for the success of their future ministry: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This was critically important. Without the Messiah's authority, the mission of the disciples and our mission today would be doomed to failure. The reader of Matthew's Gospel should know well by now the nature and power of the Messiah's authority.²⁸

The heart of the Great Commission is 28:19–20, the last words of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew knew the principle that "last words are lasting words." He chose carefully, under the Spirit's direction, the words he wanted to linger in his readers' minds; therefore he identified Jesus' authority (28:18) as the reason the disciples must carry out his orders. The central command is make disciples. At the heart of our mission is the reproduction in others of what Jesus has produced in us: faith, obedience, growth, authority, compassion, love, and a bold, truthful message as his witnesses. They were learners commanded to produce more learners.²⁹

²⁷Stuart K. Weber, "Matthew," *Holman New Testament Commentary*, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000).

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹*Ibid.*

Jesus' disciples were to reproduce other disciples of all the nations (the word translated nations is the plural of *ethnos*, meaning peoples and ethnic groups, as in 24:14). He was hinting that their fulfillment of their commission would ultimately lead to his second coming. It is significant that Matthew ended his Gospel with one more reference to the Gentile mission, challenging the Jewish Christians to lose their prejudices and unify the church. This also challenges us to break down any artificial boundaries erected by our culture as we minister impartially.³⁰

A closer look at the text shows three participles (form of a verb) that are subordinate to the central command to make disciples. Each of these clarifies the way in which Jesus' disciples are to make disciples. First, in the emphatic first position, even before make disciples, is the participle *go*. In the context, this Greek participle is best rendered, "when you have gone." Going is one of the three means by which to fulfill the central command to make disciples. Going means more than traveling across geographical borders, although this is part of Jesus' meaning. The point is that we believers are active; we are not inert. Going means crossing boundaries to make disciples—going across the street, going to dinner with an unbelieving friend, going into the inner city, going beyond one's comfort zone to make the gospel accessible to the lost. Living life is going with a purpose, every day.

Going also implies our support of people who are literally going to other cultures. We must support global outreach financially and support the people going emotionally and personally as well as through prayer. We are a part of their team. In all these ways we go, in fulfillment of the Great Commission. We also go when we support efforts to equip indigenous ministers in different cultures. We help equip them to lead people of their

³⁰Ibid.

own culture and language. This enables them to fulfill the Great Commission at home and in cultures where they will find a better reception than we would.³¹

Second, we come to the participle baptizing (present participle of baptizo meaning continually immersing them). Contextually, baptism was closely associated with the decision of faith (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:36–38; 10:47–48). It may be best to see baptizing as Jesus' way of summarizing the evangelistic half of the disciples' ministry. The third participle, teaching (Mt 28:20), represents the other half of the disciples' ministry—the edification of those who are already believers. Baptism is an initiating rite that immerses the believer into a whole new world.³²

Baptism is not a step to salvation. Rather, it is an initial step of obedience that results from a person's decision to trust the Messiah. Baptism represents the identification of people with this new way of life and faith. Baptism should be experienced as soon as possible after a person trusts Christ. Jesus specified that we are to baptize disciples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The use of the singular name implies clearly that this listing of three persons should be thought of as one name. Here is a clear affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity—one God, three distinct persons. The believer who chooses to submit to baptism into this name identifies with God's name as well as the spiritual family of all others who are identified with this same name. This is a good summary of the evangelistic task of the church. It is bringing those who identify with the world into a new identification. It is seeing themselves anew as citizens of God's kingdom, as children of God, as brothers and sisters of the Messiah, and as brothers and sisters with the rest of the family of believers. Our mission is to bring

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

people to a point where they see themselves differently—because they have become different through the transforming work of God’s grace.³³

Third, the participle teaching (present participle of *didasko*, meaning keep on teaching them) completes the series of three means by which we fulfill the Great Commission. This represents the other half of our mission—the edification or building up of those who are believers.³⁴

Jesus instructed us not only to teach content, but also to train people into obedient action: “teaching them to keep everything I have commanded you.” The teachings of Jesus recorded in Matthew are the essence of the practical teaching we are to pass on to new disciples. There is much more teaching from scripture beyond Matthew that the church needs. But his teaching in Matthew serves as a strong foundation. By fulfilling the teaching portion of the Great Commission, we take believers at every stage of spiritual maturity to the next stage of growth. This can range from the infancy of a brand-new believer to various levels of spiritual adulthood. Every believer should progress toward the perfect character of Christ (Eph 4:11–16), but none will arrive there short of eternity. So we must see ourselves as learners in a family of teachers, who themselves are also learners. The believer who is most mature will be most ready to listen and learn, even from the newest member of the family (cf. Mt 18:4).³⁵

Matthew’s last words are a concluding promise from the Messiah-king. Surely adds a note of assurance, similar to Jesus’ “I tell you the truth.” A paraphrase of the phrase I am with you always would read, “I myself am continually with you always until

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

the end of the age.” Among other things, Jesus claimed omnipresence, again laying claim to deity (“Immanuel, God with us” in 1:23). He will be with us every step of the way. I am with you always reminds us of the great promises to saints of old like Moses (Ex 3:12) and Joshua (Jo 1:5). This promise complements Jesus’ claim to universal authority in Matthew 28:18, and it undergirds the believer’s confidence in fulfilling the Great Commission. If we take out the three subordinate participial clauses from 28:18–20, boiling the commission down to its grammatical essence, we end up with this: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, make disciples of all the nations; and surely I am with you always, to the end of the age.”³⁶

Historical Foundations

According to Thomas Tarrants, “There is a crisis of discipleship in the American church today. Reams of research confirm the simple observation that in many ways the lives of most professing Christians are not much different from their nonbelieving neighbors. Like ancient Israel and the church in some periods of history, we have adopted the beliefs, values, and behaviors of the surrounding culture to an alarming degree.”³⁷ Although there are exceptions among individuals and congregations, they only serve to confirm the reality. This sad situation is bringing reproach on the name of Jesus Christ, undermining the credibility of the church, strengthening atheist rhetoric, and bringing frequent charges of hypocrisy against God’s people and his work. It stands in stark contrast with the teachings of Jesus about discipleship and the witness of the church in

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Thomas Tarrants, “The Transforming Impact of True Discipleship,” accessed June 3, 2013, http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/886.

other eras, and it presents us with an urgent and unavoidable challenge. A significant part of our problem today is widespread misunderstanding about the nature of discipleship.³⁸

Jesus began his public ministry with a simple message of grace: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17), or, as Mark records it, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15 ESV). By this Jesus meant that in his own Person, God’s kingdom was now uniquely present and people should respond by believing this good news, turning from their sins, and trusting him. Soon after he began his ministry, Jesus called his first followers, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who were fishermen. One day, as they were plying their trade on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus came up and said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). The call came at an inconvenient time, took precedence over family, friends, and livelihood, and carried a high personal price. All they could do was respond in obedient faith to the command of Jesus or walk away in unbelief. As Jesus and his small team went out ministering from city to city, he called many other men and women to follow him, and numbers increased. He called them not simply to become admirers or even converts. He called them to turn from their sins, trust him, and become his disciples—people who would seek to learn and obey his word. Most would remain in their communities and workplaces as salt and light, devoted to him, growing in grace, and ministering to those around them. Over time, they would take on the character of their Master: exhibiting love, humility, service, obedience, and endurance.³⁹

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

Responding to Jesus' call to conversion and discipleship was the beginning of a long journey for his first followers. To proceed on that journey, they needed instruction about how to live in the kingdom of God. So Jesus took them away for intensive teaching in the fundamentals of kingdom life. In the Sermon on the Mount, he gave them life-changing truths about things like humility, purity of heart, faith, prayer, love of neighbor, and radical obedience to his teachings, to mention only a few. Regular instruction would be a vital part of their community life as they grew in discipleship and ministry. To this day, the Sermon on the Mount remains foundational teaching for everyone who follows Jesus.⁴⁰

On a number of occasions, Jesus told his disciples and the crowds that following him would be costly: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:24–25; Mk 8:34–35; Lk 9:23–24). Jesus meant that it is possible to follow him only by saying a radical no to one's self-centeredness and embracing the hard fact that faithfulness might cost one's life. Only by decisively reckoning with these sobering realities could people be freed up to follow him faithfully. On another occasion, Jesus said to a large crowd that was following him, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple... So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:25, 33).

Jesus was saying that love for him must take precedence over all earthly relationships and concerns, without exception. This may sound harsh to our ears, but it was grounded in love, truth, and utter realism. Jesus never minimized the cost of

⁴⁰Ibid.

following him for the sake of bigger crowds. Nor did he encourage people to follow him when they were not ready. He wanted everyone to count the cost of putting him first and to prepare for the separation, rejection, persecution, and suffering that such a commitment could entail. Although he called for total commitment, Jesus was a man of grace. He did not load his followers with impossible demands as the Pharisees did (and some do today). He knew how weak fallen human beings were and how demanding his teaching was. He said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and will give you rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt 11:28–30). He invites all who are weary of burdensome, legalistic religion to cast it off, take up his yoke of discipleship, and learn from him.⁴¹

Those who accepted the message were to be baptized into the fellowship of the church and taught to obey all that Jesus had taught. The goal was not mere converts but committed disciples integrated into a new community, who would, in fellowship with one another, learn and obey what Jesus had taught the twelve. And because what he taught them included this very commission, it ensured that disciples would reproduce themselves from generation to generation until he returned.⁴²

The early church was eager to carry on the work Jesus had given them to do. We see them in Acts 1, gathered as a community of 120 disciples ready to “go, and make disciples of all nations,” and waiting for the Holy Spirit’s empowerment to do so. They did not have the transforming impact of true discipleship to wait long. When the Holy Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost, Peter’s empowered preaching brought three thousand

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

new believers into the fellowship. A few days later, the number grew to five thousand, and Jewish leaders responded with persecution. As it intensified, the disciples gathered for urgent prayer. Because their passion was to glorify God, they prayed not for protection but for boldness to preach Christ with even greater impact. God answered their prayers, and many more were saved and became a part of this new movement of followers of Jesus.⁴³

While on earth, Jesus had led the community of disciples. As he had promised, the Holy Spirit would now expand, lead, and empower them to glorify him and carry on his mission. Their fearless, wholehearted devotion to the risen Jesus in spite of Jewish persecution demonstrated a quality of personal and corporate life that captured the hearts and minds of multitudes, and the gospel continued to spread, eventually reaching Rome. Roman persecution came under Nero and was brutal. The Roman historian, Tacitus, tells us that in AD 64, Nero rounded up a vast number of believers in Rome and put them to death in the cruelest ways imaginable. Neither Tacitus nor the philosopher Seneca, were admirers of the Christians, but they felt sympathy for them because of the way they were wantonly sacrificed to Nero's madness. Some were crucified in mockery of Christ.

Others were covered with pitch and resin, chained to poles, and set ablaze to light Nero's gardens for his guests. Still others were sewn into animal skins, thrown to vicious dogs, and torn apart in the arena to entertain the mobs. Both Paul and Peter were martyred in Nero's insane rampage, Paul by beheading and Peter by crucifixion. One

⁴³Ibid.

might think that such a blow would destroy the church or at least permanently cripple it. But just the opposite happened.⁴⁴

There is widespread recognition that discipleship in the American church falls far short of the teaching of Jesus. In many cases, this is because people are unaware of what the Bible really teaches; in others, it is because flawed teaching misguides them. Regardless of the reason, relatively few professing believers appear to be living as true disciples of Jesus Christ. As a result, many dishonor him, discredit the church, turn off nonbelievers, and diminish the influence of God's truth in the secular world.⁴⁵

There are many ways to do discipleship. In fact, I would say that there are as many ways to do discipleship, as there are people. C. S. Lewis said "Let God be as unique with others as he was with you." That means there are billions of ways to do discipleship. The Bible does not give a handy "7 Keys to a Successful Discipleship Program." But it does outline principles that can be applied. Those principles have been applied in various ways by the church throughout history.⁴⁶

The first model of discipleship that we see in history is the Relational model, which was the dominant approach to spiritual growth during the first few centuries of the church. It is built upon the premise that discipleship will occur naturally when Christians live in community with one another. Relational discipleship was vitally important during the early church because there was no New Testament and there were very few copies of

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Heather Zempel, Wineskins for Discipleship, "Models of Discipleship Throughout Church History, accessed June 26, 2013, <http://discipleshipgroups.blogspot.com/2006/02/models-of-discipleship-throughout.html>.

Old Testament writings available to the common people. Spiritual truths were conveyed through the stories of the apostles and their letters to the churches.⁴⁷

The relational model of discipleship is reflected biblically in Paul's encouragement to Timothy: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." The relational nature of discipleship is also reflected in the description of the first church in Acts 2, where we read that they met together in homes and they devoted themselves to the fellowship of the other believers. Within the relational approach to discipleship, people grew in their relationship to Christ as they grew in their relationship to one another.⁴⁸ Modern-day expressions of this method are seen most clearly in churches that structure themselves around cell groups and neighborhood community groups and in one-on-one discipleship models.⁴⁹

As the church became more institutionalized, the relational mode of discipleship gave way to a more; the experiential mode of discipleship. Discipleship was directed at all five senses. Sights, sounds, and smells were strategically chosen to point people towards Christ. This method of discipleship is best implemented by the Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox traditions, and is reflected in their architecture, incense, music, iconography, and art. The experiential approach to discipleship is seen biblically in the tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. Every piece of furniture, every action, and every smell was strategically designed and implemented by God to draw people closer to him. The experiential approach is also seen in Acts 2, as we read

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

that the early followers of Christ were in awe of the work of the Holy Spirit around them. They experienced miracles and signs. In experiential discipleship, people were taught about Christ and grew in their relationship to him through a full immersion into a medieval multi-media experience.⁵⁰

Many post-modern or emerging churches are experimenting with these ancient forms of worship in an attempt to create an experience in which people are drawn close to Christ. These forms are discussed in works such as *Ancient-Future Faith*, *The Emerging Church*, and *Reimagining Spiritual Formation*.

The Age of Enlightenment, Protestant Reformation, and Industrial Revolution sparked a new form of discipleship—one that was rooted in an Academic or educational model. With the invention of the printing press, scriptures could be printed in abundance and the availability of the printed Word increased. The common people could own their own copy of the Bible. Great emphasis was attached to the Word—*Sola Scriptura*—and the emphasis on relationship and experience were diminished. New philosophies and new forms of thinking, based on logic and reason, influenced the way scripture was read and applied.

The academic approach to discipleship can be seen biblically in Romans 12:2, where Paul instructs his readers, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In other words, right thinking leads to right action. We also see this model of discipleship in Acts 2, where we read that the early church was devoted to the apostle’s teaching and continued to meet in the temple

⁵⁰Ibid.

courts. In the academic approach to discipleship, people were taught about Christ and grew in their relationship to him through a systematic, academic approach.⁵¹

Reformed churches and Sunday school or equipping programs of many evangelical churches best model this form of discipleship. The works of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the Puritans reflect this approach to discipleship. It is a focus on renewing our minds and striving to have the mind of Christ.⁵²

In the 19th and 20th centuries, two new approaches to discipleship emerged: personal and incarnational. We will examine the personal approach first. Theologically conservative churches tended to move towards a personal approach to discipleship. Bibles were produced in mass. Various translations became available. And individualistic Bibles were available- for women, for men, for leaders, for teenagers, for teachers, etc. Bible study literature was distributed for people to use throughout the week. Books like *Experiencing God* and the *Purpose Driven Life* were published to be used along with scripture in spiritual formation. Many times, this approach was combined with the relational model (small groups) or the academic model (Sunday school); however, the emphasis on a personal relationship with Christ was most emphasized.

A biblical example of the personal approach to discipleship is seen in 2 Timothy 2:15, where Paul exhorts Timothy, personal approach is also seen in Acts 2, where we read that people devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. It is interesting to note that this was also the approach to spiritual formation used by the Desert Fathers. Within the framework of the personal approach to discipleship, the church provided people with

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

materials and taught them how to develop a personal relationship with God, and people grew in their knowledge and relationship with God through personal pursuit.⁵³

In the 20th century, more theologically liberal churches adopted a different approach—the incarnational approach. These churches espoused a belief that Jesus’ call to action on behalf of the poor, sick, and oppressed was the channel by which we learned about him, became more like him, and grew in our relationship with him. We become like Jesus by being his hands and feet to the world around us. The incarnational approach is closely tied to the relational and experiential approaches. The greatest biblical mandate for the incarnational approach is seen in the separation of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. Jesus instructs us to take care of the hungry, thirsty, sick, poor, stranger, and prisoner. The incarnational approach is also reflected in Acts 2: “selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.” Within the framework of the incarnational model, people grew in their knowledge and relationship with Christ by seeking to become like him through service out outreach to others. Organizations such as World Vision and Samaritan’s Purse are implementing modern-day versions of the incarnational approach.⁵⁴

What’s Next?

All of these models are biblically valid, historically tested, and continue to find expression in the contemporary church. Each model appeals to different types of people. What forms will discipleship take on in the 21st century and beyond? It is difficult to tell, but history demonstrates that it will certainly be tied to the technological advances and prevailing philosophies of the day. As we harness the power of new

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

technologies, the message of discipleship will remain constant while the methods of discipleship will evolve. We will strive to create discipleship experiences that draw on the best of the historical forms while teaching scripture and spiritual formation in ways that are relevant to our generation and culture.

Using the Bible as our foundation and tradition as a guide, we will experiment with historical models of discipleship and reinvent them for the post-modern era. We will strive to be a church that incorporates a model of discipleship that is relational, experiential, academic, personal, and incarnational.

Theological Foundations

According to Hall, theology is studying the customs of religions and how their teachings affects human individually, and as a whole. The study includes religious faith, practice, and experience; especially in relation to the study of God and God's relation to humanity. There are many different types of theology. Theology comes from the Greek words meaning God and to reason. It is, in essence, the study of God and of religion.⁵⁵

According to Hall, theology is what occurs when the Christian community knows itself to be living between text and context, between the revelatory answer and the human question between the Bible and the newspaper, between the tradition handed down from those who have gone before and uncompleted story of time present and future.⁵⁶ In simple terms, theology is that ongoing activity of the whole church that aims at clarifying what the gospel must mean here and now. It is simply not a doctrine, a biblical study, a religious experience, nor a reflection of ethical and moral sensitivity. Theology is

⁵⁵Douglas John Hall, 2003. "What is Theology?" *Cross Currents*, accessed June 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/214944273?accountid=13843>, 171.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

preparation for the deepest involvement in the realities of the world, and a freedom that can be enjoyed only by persons who admit their own incapacity.⁵⁷

The Doctrine Of The Person Of Christ

For the purpose of this Doctor of Ministry project, “Disciple-Making: A Strategic Method Of Increasing And Maintaining Congregational Growth And Vitality In The 21st Century Church” this section will focus on two specific theologies: The “Doctrine of the Person of Christ,” and the “Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” In the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, we examined what Christology means to Christian believers. The definition of the word Christology comes from two Greek words that mean: Christ and Word, joined together it means: the study of Christ. According to McGrath, Christology is the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ in the attempt to create a better understanding of Christ's humanity and divinity, and its relevance to humankind in Biblical times, now and in future generation.⁵⁸

A biblical perception of Christ as a person is crucial to humankind salvation. There are diverse religions and cults that declare their beliefs in Christ. However, they have doubts about the Christ presented in the Word. Christology is important to help humankind understand the meaning of the divine being of Christ. It allows humankind to get a clearer understanding in relation to Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for all of the humanity's sins. Christology relates to humanity with clarity that Jesus had to become

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, 5th ed. (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers, 2011), 265-293.

human so that He could die.⁵⁹ It demonstrates that Christ had to be God so that His death would pay for humankind sins. It is crucial to Christian believers that they acquire an accurate understanding of Jesus Christ. It is also important for believers to understand the price He paid for humanity.⁶⁰

The humanity of Christ, although it is body and soul, and an individual, is nothing subsistent or real in itself. Thus it did not exist prior to its union with the Logos. It has no independent existence alongside or apart from him. The human nature of Christ has no personhood of its own. It is *anhypostatos*—the formula in which the description culminates. Or, more positively, it is *enhypostatos*. It has personhood, subsistence, reality, only in its union with the Logos of God.⁶¹

The *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* doctrine allows Barth to talk about revelation without compromising either Jesus' divine or human natures. Since Jesus' human nature does not derive from human potential but is entirely God's initiative—'human nature possesses no capacity for becoming the human nature of Jesus Christ'—the *anhypostasia* controverts the notion that God adopted a man with a pre-established identity. That is, Jesus is more than a prestigious human being to whom God gave a special task. To affirm that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit is to also affirm he has always been the Son of God.⁶²

Christian theology focused their attention on Jesus Christ, who came into this world as flesh. There was significant evidence provided in the Bible that Jesus Christ was completely different from any other person in many ways. Christ Jesus was an enigma to the people who walked with Him, and to those who heard him in the churches of the early

⁵⁹Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 53.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 54.

⁶¹MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 53.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 54.

centuries, just as He is to the people of today.⁶³ The early church was filled with speculations about the nature and person of Christ Jesus.

Theologians of yesterday and today have all tried to examine and explain the nature and person of Christ, but they cannot find words to explain God's personality. God's ways are not like humanity and God's thoughts are not like humanity. In the heart, and center of every Christian believer should be Christ Jesus.⁶⁴

The source of humankind salvation comes from Christ Jesus based on His life, death and resurrection. The only way humankind can obtain salvation is through Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. McGrath defined the role of Jesus Christ as the Messiah emphasizing the importance and the connection to Judaism and Christianity. The author explored the divinity and humanity of Christ as the Son of God and the Son of man.⁶⁵ The author acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord for those who believed in Christ from those who did not. He further defined Jesus Christ as the Savior who saves humankind from sin and as God who is the forgiver of sin. Christ was both divinity and humanity. Jesus gave us proof by the words He spoke and by His actions, yet at the same time He showed He was truly human.⁶⁶

According to Fowl, in his discussion of the works of Christ, the core of Christianity, and the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ gave His life for us that we might live. Christ died so humanity can be free from the power of sin, the

⁶³Ingolf U. Dalferth, 2000. "I Determine What God Is: Theology In The Age Of Cafeteria Religion," *Theology Today* 57, no. 1: 5-23, accessed May 9, 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/208063680?accountid=13843>.

⁶⁴Stephen Fowl, 2003, "What Is New Testament Theology?" *Interpretation* 57, no. 2: 204-206, accessed August 2013, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/202698170?accountid=13843>.

⁶⁵McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, 265-293.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

confinement of death and the captivity of self and fear. Jesus Christ came into the world because he had to solve humanity's original problem, which is sin.⁶⁷ All of humanity is sinners. In Romans 3, it stated, "The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, since, all of humanity have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."⁶⁸ Sin is a hated topic for discussion, but humankind cannot close their eyes to an obvious fact, which the Bible declares, and knowledge confirms. The obscurity of egocentricity and confinement of sin overshadows our whole life. Unlike humanity, God is absolutely pure and spotless. In 1 John 1, "And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."⁶⁹ Light and darkness can never exist together neither can sin and God. Darkness is dispelled by light. Therefore, the sinner was banished from God's holy presence, and he cannot be in a relationship of fellowship with God until his sin has been cleansed away.

The questions that can be asked are: how humankind, who was banished as sinners be reconciled to a holy God? And how can humankind sins be forgiven, so that they can have fellowship with God? In the presence of God, Christ is the mediator between God and humankind, Christ who gave His life and shared His blood for the sins of the world. Christ is the bearer of the gift of the Holy Spirit and Christ is the living example of how believers should live their lives to inherit the Kingdom of God. Based on

⁶⁷Fowl, "What Is New Testament Theology?"

⁶⁸Rom 3:22-23 (NRSV).

⁶⁹1 Jn 1:5.

the beliefs that Christ Jesus is Lord, Savior and God, and because of His life, death and resurrection, humankind was given the gift of Salvation and forgiveness for their sins.⁷⁰

This Doctor of Ministry project ties in with helping new converts and seasoned believers to understand the importance of “The Doctrine of the Person of Christ,” especially, His sacrifice upon the cross. Today’s Christian teachings and preaching is generally inclined to spotlight more on prosperity. The focus is mainly on the condition for obtaining wealth, success, and good fortune. The center of attention being placed on the things that God do for believers, rather than what He has already done. Preachers and pastors tend to be more afraid to tell people what would happen to them if they do not live according to the Word.

It appears that what take precedence over everything else is not offending their congregation, which seems to be their number one priority. This situation does not fall on the preachers alone, but the congregation as well, because when many of them feel they have been offended they stop giving to the church. Finances are the first thing people stop giving, then time and services, and then, a great many of them leave the church. A clearer understanding of the most important elements will assist them to understand what is expected of the Christian believer. They should understand that they are not committed to the pastor, leader, or the church, but their commitment should be to God and His kingdom. The importance of understanding and staying committed to God is what makes the Christian believers stay in one place and allow them to grow spiritually mature.

⁷⁰Fowl, “What Is New Testament Theology?”

The Doctrine Of The Holy Spirit

In The Doctrine of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is a fundamental element. It also a fundamental part of the Christian believer's faith. It is critical for Christians to have a clear understanding who God is, what God is like, how God relates to humankind, and how humankind should relate to Him.⁷¹ Not to be misunderstood, there is only one God. Humankind cannot fully understand everything about God, Christ the Son, or the Holy Spirit. God exists as three persons and the three persons are not each part of God, but are each fully and equally God. They flow into one another and are relational and there is no division.⁷²

In the context of the Holy Spirit, humankind sees Christ's love for His disciples. He saw their continued need of a comforter and helper, and in view of His imminent departure, He provided one, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would abide with them continually, and even today, the Holy Spirit abides with Christian believers.⁷³ In connection with the momentous event of the resurrection of Christ, which is the basis of Christianity, the whole Godhead became engaged in the Salvation of God children.⁷⁴

Christian believers must develop an awareness of the distinctive role that The Holy Spirit plays in the role of our salvation. This will give them a greater comfort and appreciation for God in our prayers. Recognizing the distinctive roles that the Holy Spirit has, Christian believers should never think God and Christ roles are separate. Instead,

⁷¹Fowl, 2003, "What Is New Testament Theology?"

⁷²McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction*, 265-293.

⁷³Andy Alexis-Baker, 2011. "Theology Is Ethics: How Karl Barth Sees The Good Life," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 64, no. 4: 425-438, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/894111830?accountid=13843>.

⁷⁴Fowl, 2003, "What Is New Testament Theology?"

everything that one Person is involved in; the other two are also involved in. In Romans 8, it says, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”⁷⁵

In this work the Holy Spirit makes real to Christian believers what has been taken by faith, and gives the consciousness of that reality. It is with this in mind that the apostle John says, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.”⁷⁶

In Acts 2, the arrival of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost birthed the Church. This body of believers exalted Christ as their risen Savior. They acknowledged Christ as the head of the church and the foundation upon which it was built. The Holy Spirit possessed and indwelt the church as the temple of God. In many books of the Bible it shows where the Holy Spirit indwells the whole church and individual believers simultaneously.⁷⁷ The church is given gifts and graces by the Holy Spirit for life, service, and productivity. The Holy Spirit gives the anointing, direction, and vision for the church to the senior shepherd and visionary for the particular church. The Holy Spirit allows Christian believers to understand the truth.

God has always called special people from humanity. He has chosen them to share the good news with the rest of humankind. God uses the Holy Spirit as the One to seal, anoint and set apart those He has chosen for ministry. God uses the Holy Spirit to preside and direct His will and His plan for the people and the church. Many scriptures identifies that Christian believers must be baptized with water and by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.⁷⁸ In Acts 1, Jesus told the disciples that they must not leave this place,

⁷⁵Rom 8:16.

⁷⁶1Jn 5:10.

⁷⁷Eph 2:19-22; Rom 8:1, 11; Jn 14:17; 2 Cor 1:22.

⁷⁸Mt 16:18, Acts 1:4-5, 2:3, 2:47, 11:15; 1 Cor 12:13; 6:15-17; Eph 2:16.

but they must wait for the gift that was promised to them by the Father, of which He had spoken. He told them that John the prophet baptized by water, but soon, the Holy Spirit, the promised One, would baptize them.⁷⁹ Jesus told the apostles that when they received the power from the Holy Spirit, they would become witness of who He is throughout the world.

It is important for Christian believers to understand that the Holy Spirit has revealing power. The truth of the Word revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit is what draws people to God. It is doubtful that conversion would take place in a person without the Word revealed by the Holy Spirit. Reaching people with the message is important. Salvation is contingent upon faith in Christ. Humanity can obtain righteousness only through Christ, but without Christ they will reap judgment. God allows the believer to live a transformed life by the filling of the Holy Spirit. Christian believers grow spiritually when they are empowered by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. It is revelation by the Holy Spirit that gives a Christian the ability to change and grow in righteousness.⁸⁰

Christian believers act as they were created to act. In these actions Christians find their true selves in Christ: Human beings respond to their Creator. We learn that our lives are not our own but God's.⁸¹ Barth claims, that our duties to God are not the same as our duties to our neighbor. Therefore, we cannot claim that social action is the sum of Christian life or collapse faith, worship, or theology into ethics. What God above all wills

⁷⁹Acts 1:4-5.

⁸⁰Alexis-Baker, "Theology is Ethics."

⁸¹Ibid.

for human beings are worship, thanksgiving, and petition. Jesus is the model. Yet, our converted lives are orientated not only towards God, but also towards other people: "The biblical individuals is not selfishly wrapped up in their own concerns. In living this other-centered life, Christian believers follow Jesus. In the divine election, God elects to be for us."⁸²

This Doctor of Ministry project ties in with increasing awareness and knowledge of seasoned Christian believers and new converts in their understanding of the importance of the Doctrine and the Works of the Holy Spirit. It is an important part of the Christian believers walk to experience spiritual growth. Humankind is either controlled by their carnality or flesh, or by the power of the Holy Spirit, who resides in them. For the Christian believer to benefit from the power of the Holy Spirit they must consciously choose to be controlled or empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit's presence is permanent but Christian believers must repeatedly choose to yield to God, so they can experience the Holy Spirit's transforming power to change and to grow. In actual experience, walking in the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit means living the Christian life, facing temptations, and making decisions with a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit. He is the one who enable us to produce godly fruits. He gives Christian believers spiritual gifts. The presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life is conditioned upon their continued walk with the Lord. The Holy Spirit allows Christian believers in the church of God to engage the membership/partnership, to adopt and assess the needs of the community, and to actively participate as the body of Christ to incorporate the needs of the community into ministries of the church.

⁸²Dalferth, "I Determine What God Is!"

If humankind get spiritually cold or backslide, they must not expect to experience the assurance that they are children of God.

The visionary leaders of this context have adopted the Jesus model of ministry. The doctrine of the person and nature of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit are the foundational theologies of this ministry. The theologies of the ministry incorporate the engagement among the partners within the organization. The leader's strategic plans for retaining its members is adopting the discipleship model of Jesus and meeting the needs of the people in the community. The leadership will use both theologies to educate its partnership/membership. The plan is to become accomplished is retaining the current partners, motivating the current partners, new converts and new partnership to become truly effective disciples for Christ. These theologies in the discipleship model of ministry will reveal information on the factors that influence partnership retention. This information can work to the advantage of the context where the problems of partnership retention exist.⁸³

The Bible illustrates the importance of being a part of a body. Christian fellowship is important to the believer. In Romans 12: 4, is a comparison of Christian fellowship to the human body. Paul describes the fellowship of believers as forming one body in Christ.⁸⁴ The church is one body purposefully, with each partner contributing their individual talents and gifts according to the purpose and goals of the head of the church who is Christ. We are to judge ourselves soberly, because we need an honest self-evaluation so that we can function effectively in the body of Christ. The church is described as a body, which is in Christ and relates to the relationship of Christian

⁸³Osborne, *Sticky Church*.

⁸⁴Rom 12: 4 (NRSV).

believers within the church and to relationship with people outside the church. Christian believers need to maximize the effectiveness of our work for the Kingdom and to ensure that God gets the glory that is due His name.

When the church in the context adopts a biblical model of discipleship, in order to meet the relevant needs of the people in the community, it will also reach a greater level of membership/partnership retention. The leaders are aware of this retention issue within this context. A holistic approach through the person and nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit will incorporate all of the tools necessary for worship satisfaction, church characteristics, church partners' cultural characteristics, and partners.' The leaders will have strategic plans with the objective and focus of addressing deficiencies among dissatisfied partners and their intention to leave the church. In order to stem this tide, church leaders and administrators must understand the cultural and contextual factors that affect the membership/partnership in general and more specifically, those members/partners who express a real level of dissatisfaction.

In conclusion, the two doctrines, The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, and The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit will assist in positioning strategic plans in place to educate and teach old believers and new converts the following: The ways Christian believers should live. Why Christian believers must be taught the importance becoming fully engaged in study of the Word, for a more fulfilling and satisfying life. Why Christian believers must grow and mature spiritually to become better equipped to handle the work that God is calling Christians to do.

The relationships between satisfaction with attributes of worship, church characteristics, and church member/partner characteristics, and church member/partner's

intention to leave a particular church are all interconnected and interrelated. As part of the leadership team in Global Empowerment Ministries, strategic plans must be designed with the objective and focus to address deficiencies in the theological, theoretical, and empirical literature regarding membership/partnership retention, and their intention to leave the church. As part of church's leadership and administration, the factors that affect members/partners, and their intent to leave the church, and the decline of membership /partnership in the context of this particular Christian religious organization is a factor of urgency.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Global Empowerment Ministries is confronting a dilemma experienced by many churches; how to fulfill the demand of the Great Commission. With much of a new church's life being focused on organizing and establishing internal processes, evangelism and discipleship literally gets lost in the process. These key ministries are then relegated to second or third tier importance and eventually become minimal concerns at best. Believing that quality of worship services translate into church growth, savvy promotions and state of the art media replace missions. It is then when the church loses its divine unction¹ and ceases to operate by its biblical mandate.

The hypothesis for this project is that by infusing discipleship and evangelism into the DNA of the church, Global Empowerment Ministries, can avoid plateauing and experience success and growth. For this to happen, each member must be fully equipped to be a disciple-making member. To fully undertake this project, it will necessary for the entire church to accept this task. It will also require engaging the congregants in an educational process that involves practical application. This approach will not be a phase project but an ongoing operation of implanting DNA in the marrow of the church's organic structure. To reduce any anxiety, fear, or reluctance to engage disciple-making, there will be a practical application of one-on-one discipling.

¹Rv 2:4-5.

In order to conduct and evaluate the project, a qualitative research method will be utilized. The project will begin with a pre-test, which will measure the congregations understanding and knowledge on the subject of the disciple-making process.

Over a four-week assessment period, participants will engage in a pre-test, a disciple-making seminar, a four week Bible study course and a post-test. This process will engage the participants in an educational dialogue designed to help assess the spiritual maturity and understanding of their role in disciple-making. Because disciple-making is essential to the growth of the church, each member must be taught that the lack of consent to the Great Commission is to be disobedient to God's Word.

This project will subsequently be evaluated by its results. The preferred outcome is that the participants will be compelled through obedience to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the nations. As individual members of the church begin to model the relational calling of making disciples of all nations, the church will find its rightful place in bringing ultimate glory to God.²

Project Agenda

Session One

Session one of the project was of significant benefit to the members of Global Empowerment Ministries. A four-hour training workshop assisted the church in fulfilling Christ's mandate to make disciple. The workshop began with a pre-test that measured the knowledge and willingness of the congregants to take on the process of disciple-making. Dialogical teaching was introduced by a church growth consultant. Handouts and note takers will be provided to each participant to encourage them to learn the fundamental

²Jn 15:8.

process of disciple-making. The workshop covered scripture and strategies for building the body of Christ. A question and answer period was built into the workshop to allow the participants to have access to the consultant to answer any of their concerns in a one-on-one discussion.

Session Two & Three

Sessions two and three ran concurrently on Sunday morning and Tuesday evenings. The Sunday and Tuesday Bible studies were exegetical teachings from the scripture that covered biblical strategies for disciple-making. The sermons assisted the participants in understanding how they have been gifted by the Holy Spirit to receive power and after that become witnesses to Christ to the end of the earth.³ This process was utilizing to enhance the biblical understand of the congregation. This method allowed for free exchange of thought to ensure that the congregation is in-synch with the teaching and the text. All Bible study sessions had handouts and note-fill-in sheets to connect the participants into a deeper level of learning. The Bible study series, *Disciple-Making Is The Will of God* came from the following passages: Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8, John 15:16 and Luke 9:62.

Disciple-making Questions

1. What is the purpose of making disciples in the name of Jesus?
2. What is the relationship between making disciples and the growth of the church?
3. Why is it necessary to receive power from the Holy Spirit when making disciples?

³Acts 1:8.

4. Why did Jesus instruct his disciples to go and bear fruit that will last?
5. Is there a difference between discipleship and disciple-making? Explain

Session Four

Session four was the administration of the post-test. The post-test assessed participants' progress and understanding of the material presented during the four-weeks. It also gave insight into the affect and influence the project had on the church and participants. The post-test will also determine what further areas need to be explored to strengthen the entire process of disciple-making.

Pre and Post Test Disciple-making Questionnaire

Q1: Why should I be making disciples?

- A. The Great Commission
- B. The Great Commandment
- C. To grow the Church
- D. To impress God

Q2: How do I disciple someone?

- A. Bring them to church
- B. Find a F.A.T (Faithful, Available, and Teachable) follower
- C. Encourage them to read their Bible
- D. Take them to a discipleship seminar

Q3: How do I find someone to disciple me?

- A. Pray for a good leader
- B. Pray for a good teacher/pastor

C. Ask someone

D. Start by building conviction about discipleship.

Q4: Am I too busy for discipleship?

A: Yes, God understands your schedules

B. No, God will make room for you to be obedient

C No, I'll just fit it into my schedule

D. Yes, but I will make time for it sooner or later

Q5: What does discipleship look like?

A. Meeting weekly, teaching scripture and sharing your faith

B. Meeting regularly, teaching scripture and sharing your faith when possible

C. Daily walking with God.

D. Signing up for the discipleship committee.

Q6: What characteristics do I look for in a potential disciple?

A: Find an individual who is F.A.T.

B. Find an energetic person who is willing

C. Find a teachable person

D. Find a new Christian who is on fire for Jesus

Q7: What do I do if my church is not holistically making disciples?

A. Find a church that is holistically making disciples

B. Take your concern to the church body

C. Pray and ask God to convict leaders toward being obedient to discipleship

D. Ask an expert to come in and teach your church

Q8: What if I feel I am not quite ready to make disciples?

- A. All Christians can make disciples if they are F.A.T.
- B. Pray for God to make you ready
- C. Ask God to convict you to change your mind
- D. Do it when the time is right.

Q7: What is the difference between discipleship and Bible study?

- A. They are both the same
- B. One is required by God and the other by Jesus
- C. Discipleship helps you grow, Bible study help you learn.
- D. The Bible prepares you to do discipleship.

Q8: What is the difference between discipleship and evangelizing/making converts?

- A. The are both the same
- B. Evangelizing is catching and discipleship is teaching
- C. Evangelizing is teaching and discipleship is catching
- D. Discipleship is joining the church and evangelizing is getting visitors in Church

Q9: What if my ministry has a lot of people ready to be discipled but not enough people ready to disciple them?

- A. Pray for more leaders
- B. Ask those ready to be discipled to wait
- C. Begin with who you have and encourage others to join.
- D. Double-up on discipleship classes.

Q10: Is there a difference between healthy, growing churches and non-healthy ones?

- A. Yes, healthy churches have more members
- B. Yes, healthy churches have more resources to stay healthy
- C. Yes healthy churches have strong evangelism programs
- D. Yes, healthy churches have vital and sustainable discipleship ministries

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

In this dispensation of the modern day Christian church, religion has become commonplace. Church hopping has become a pastime for many believers. People join the church for many reasons, for example, some join because of the programs, others because of the pastor, and others for the youth programs and others because they are going through some kind of personal challenges relating to health, finances, family issues, divorce and the list can go on and on. People believe the church is a safe haven where they can find hope, encouragement, fulfillment, understanding, spiritual growth, and satisfaction. In other words, people join the church for many reasons and many tend to bring along their own hidden agendas. However, when something does not go their way or they encounter opposition of any kind to their ideas, or something is said by someone and they feel offended or hurt, their first reaction is to leave where they are and go somewhere else, instead of staying right where they are and working whatever it is out.

The body of believers in the church encompasses a comprehensive range of diverse personalities. The various pressures this creates can be quite challenging for any congregation. Global Empowerment Ministry has experienced tremendous growth since it was birthed eight years ago. Although many that have joined and become partners/members with this organization, they have not “Stuck and Stayed.” The leaders of GEM adopted an aggressive and proactive approach towards this issues and has

implemented several church models in practice to try and eliminate this problem; however, the models have not been successful.

The project for this Doctor of Ministry is to develop a model that might be helpful in turning things around and successfully eliminate the problem. The proposed model is a Biblical Model of Discipleship. The model for this project is a combination of discipleship based workshops, preaching, discipleship training (Sunday school), and church at study (Bible study), where participatory engagement would allow the leaders to determine what the entire body needs as it pertains to the hypothesis for this project- infusing evangelism and discipleship into the DNA of the church, and allow Global Empowerment Ministries, to avoid plateauing and experience success and growth.

Session One

The project began with a four hour “Evangelism, Discipleship and the Great Commission” workshop. This workshop was conducted to measure the congregations understanding and knowledge on the subject of the disciple-making process with pre and post test participation. This process engaged the participants in an educational dialogue designed to help assess the spiritual maturity and understanding of their role in the disciple-making process. The workshop covered pre-test that measured the knowledge and willingness of the congregants to take on the process of disciple-making. The fundamental process of disciple-making was done with an experienced church growth consultant, scriptures, and strategies for building the body of Christ.

The following are the analytical responses from the data gathered by the context associates for the pre and post test of the four hour workshop training on Discipleship, Evangelism and the Great Commission in session one:

Question 1: The Great Commission was designed for what reason?

Pretest Results:

- 71% of the participants responded that the Great Commission was designed for the purpose of discipleship and evangelism.
- 24% responded that the Great Commission was designed for the purpose of discipleship.
- 5% responded that the Great Commission was designed for the purpose of church growth.

Posttest Results:

- 94% of the participants responded that the Great Commission was designed for the purpose of discipleship and evangelism.
- 6% responded that the Great Commission was designed for the purpose of discipleship.

Question 2: Most people believe this about discipleship and evangelism?

Pretest Results:

- 42.9% of the participants responded that they are part of one system, disciple making.
- 28.6% responded that they are separate functions.
- 19% responded that they help grow congregation effectively.
- 9.5% responded that one is harder the other.

Posttest Results:

- 61.11% of the participants responded that they are separate functions.
- 33.33% responded that they are part of one system, disciple making.
- 5.56% responded that they help to grow congregations effectively.

Question 3: To make disciples require what process?

Pretest Results:

- 38% of the participants responded that to make disciples, require the process of preaching, teaching and reaching.
- 24% responded that the process require going, baptizing and teaching.
- 19% responded that the process require going, preaching and reaching.
- 19% responded that the process require teaching, reaching and baptizing.

Posttest Results:

- 67% of the participants responded that to make disciples require the process of going, baptizing, and teaching.
- 22 % responded that the process require teaching, reaching and baptizing.
- 11% responded that the process require preaching, teaching and reaching.

Question 4: What is Evangelism?

Pretest Results:

- 61.9% of the participants responded that Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost.
- 28.6% responded that it is sharing the Good News to the lost.
- 9.5% responded that it is proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Posttest Results:

- 61.1% of the participants responded that Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost.
- 22.2% responded that it is sharing the Good News to the lost.
- 16.7% responded that it is proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Question 5: Can Evangelism be done without discipleship?

Pretest Results

- 52.4% of the participants responded that evangelism cannot be done without discipleship.
- 33.3% responded that evangelism can be done without discipleship in some cases.
- 14.3% responded that evangelism can be done without discipleship.

Posttest Results:

- 89% of the participants responded that evangelism cannot be done without discipleship.
- 5.5% responded that evangelism can be done without discipleship in some cases.
- 5.5% responded that evangelism can be done without discipleship.

Question 6: The goal of Evangelism is to?

Pretest Results:

- 47.6% of the participants responded that the goal of evangelism is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- 23.8% responded that the goal was to win converts.
- 23.8% responded that the goal was to get people to know who Jesus is.
- 4.8% responded that the goal was to grow the church.

Posttest Results:

- 55.6% of the participants responded that the goal of evangelism was to win converts.
- 38.9% responded that the goal was to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- 5.5% responded that the goal was to get people to know who Jesus is.

Question 7: What is Discipleship?

Pretest Results:

- 43% of the participants responded that discipleship is training people to be mature disciples.
- 24% responded that discipleship is getting people to know who Jesus is.
- 19% responded that discipleship is teaching people about Jesus.
- 14% responded that discipleship is not getting people to know who Jesus is, training people to be mature disciples or teaching people about Jesus.

Posttest Results:

- 61% of the participants responded that discipleship is training people to be mature disciples.
- 16.7% responded that discipleship is getting people to know who Jesus is.
- 16.7% responded that discipleship is teaching people about Jesus.
- 5.6% responded that discipleship is not getting people to know who Jesus is, training people to be mature disciples or teaching people about Jesus.

Question 8: What does the word Disciple mean?

Pretest Results:

- 55% of the participants responded that the word disciple means learner who follow.
- 45% responded that the word disciple means pupil and learner who follow.

Posttest Results:

- 44% of the participants responded that the word disciple means pupil and learner who follow.
- 39% responded that the word disciple means learner who follow.
- 17% responded that the word disciple means pupil.

Question 9: What does Evangelism lead to?

Pretest Results:

- 40% of the participants responded that evangelism lead to disciples.
- 35% responded that evangelism lead to a deeper relationship with God.
- 15% responded that evangelism lead to church growth.
- 10% responded that evangelism lead to mature Christians.

Posttest Results:

- 44% of the participants responded that evangelism lead to disciples.
- 22% responded that evangelism lead to a deeper relationship with God.
- 22% responded that evangelism lead to mature Christians.
- 12% responded that evangelism lead to church growth.

Question 10: What do converts need to grow to maturity?

Pretest Results:

- 45% of the participants responded that converts need Bible study and worship to grow to maturity.
- 40% responded that converts need discipleship to grow to maturity.
- 15% responded that converts need evangelism to grow to maturity.

Posttest Results:

- 72% of the participants responded that converts need discipleship to grow to maturity.
- 11% responded that converts need Bible study to grow to maturity.

- 11% responded that converts need Bible study and worship to grow to maturity.
- 6% responded that converts need evangelism to grow to maturity.

After the four-hour “Evangelism, Discipleship and the Great Commission” workshop a Bible study series and teaching sessions followed. The second session was a Sunday Discipleship training lesson titled “Disciple-Making is the Will of God.” The lesson came from Matthew 28: 19-20.

Question 1: Why should I be making disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 64.29% of the participants responded that they should be making disciples because it is the Great Commission.
- 21.43% responded that they should be making disciples because it is to grow the church.
- 7.14% responded that they should be making disciples because it is the Great Commandment.
- 7.14% responded that they should be making disciples because it is to impress God.

Posttest Results:

- 71% of the participants responded that they should be making disciples because it is the Great Commission.
- 29% responded that they should be making disciples because it is to grow the church.

Question 2: How do I disciple someone?

Pretest Results:

- 43% of the participants responded that to disciple someone, they must bring them to church.
- 29% responded that to disciple someone, they must find a faithful, available, teachable (F.A.T.) follower.
- 21% responded that to disciple someone, they must encourage them to read their Bible.
- 7% responded that to disciple someone, they must take them to a discipleship seminar.

Posttest Results:

- 47% of the participants responded that to disciple someone, they must find a faithful, available, teachable (F.A.T.) follower.
- 41% responded that to disciple someone, they must encourage them to read their Bible.
- 12% responded that to disciple someone, they must bring them to church.

Question 3: How do I find someone to disciple me?

Pretest Results:

- 57% of the participants responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must pray for a good teacher/pastor.
- 36% responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must start building conviction about discipleship.
- 7% responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must pray for a good leader.

Posttest Results:

- 47.06% of the participants responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must pray for a good teacher/pastor.

- 23.53% responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must pray for a good leader.
- 17.65% responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must start building conviction about discipleship.
- 11.76% responded that to find someone to disciple them, they must ask someone.

Question 4: Am I too busy for discipleship?

Pretest Results:

- 79% of the participants responded that they were not too busy for discipleship, that God will make room for them to be obedient.
- 14% responded that they were too busy for discipleship, and that God understands their schedules.
- 7% responded that they were not too busy for discipleship, that they would fit it into their schedules.

Posttest Results:

- 94% of the participants responded that they were not too busy for discipleship, that God will make room for them to be obedient.
- 6% responded that they were not too busy for discipleship, but they will fit it into their schedule.

Question 5: What does discipleship look like?

Pretest Results:

- 93% of the participants responded that discipleship looks like a daily walk with God
- 7% responded that discipleship looks like signing up for the discipleship committee.

Posttest Results:

- 72% of the participants responded that discipleship looks like a daily walk with God.

- 17% responded that discipleship looks like meeting weekly, teaching scripture and sharing their faith.
- 11% responded that discipleship looks like meeting regularly, teaching scripture and sharing their faith when possible.

Question 6: What characteristics do I look for in a potential disciple?

Pretest Results:

- 54% of the participants responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find an individual who is F.A.T. (faithful, available and teachable).
- 31% responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find a teachable person.
- 15% responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find an energetic person who is willing.

Posttest Results:

- 48% of the participants responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find an individual who is faithful, available and teachable. (F.A.T.)
- 26% responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be someone who is a new Christian and on fire for Jesus.
- 13% responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find a teachable person.
- 13% responded that the characteristics to look for in a potential disciple would be to find an energetic person who is willing.

Question 7: What do I do if my church is not holistically making disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 74% of the participants responded that if their church is not holistically making disciples, they should pray and ask God to convict leaders toward being obedient to discipleship.
- 29% responded that if their church is not holistically making disciples, that they should take their concerns to the church body.

Posttest Results:

- 83% of the participants responded that if their church is not holistically making disciples, they should pray and ask God to convict leaders toward being obedient to discipleship.
- 17% responded that if their church is not holistically making disciples, that they should take their concerns to the church body.

Question 8: What if I feel I am not quite ready to make disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 50% of the participants responded that they would pray and ask God to make them ready to make disciples.
- 36% responded that all Christians can make disciples if they are F. A. T. (faithful, available and teachable).
- 14% responded that they can ask God to convict them to change their minds so they can become ready to make disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 72% of the participants responded that they would pray and ask God to make them ready to make disciples
- 17% responded that all Christians can make disciples if they are F. A. T. (faithful, available and teachable).
- 11% responded that they can ask God to convict them to change their minds so they can become ready to make disciples.

Question 9: What is the difference between discipleship and Bible study?

Pretest Results:

- 61.5% of the participants responded that the difference between discipleship and Bible study is, discipleship helps them to grow, while Bible study helps them to learn.

- 30.8% responded that the difference between discipleship and Bible study is that the Bible prepares them to do discipleship.
- 7.7% responded that there is no difference between discipleship and Bible study, both the same.

Posttest Results:

- 67% of the participants responded that the difference between discipleship and Bible study is, discipleship helps them to grow, while Bible study helps them to learn.
- 22% responded that the difference between discipleship and Bible study is that the Bible prepares them to do discipleship.
- 11% responded that there is no difference between discipleship and Bible study, both the same.

Question 10: What is the difference between discipleship and evangelizing/making converts?

Pretest Results:

- 31% of the participants responded that the difference between discipleship and evangelizing or making converts is that discipleship is joining the church and evangelizing is getting visitors in church.
- 31% responded that the difference is that discipleship is teaching and evangelizing is catching.
- 23% responded that discipleship and evangelizing are both the same.
- 15% responded that the difference is that evangelizing is teaching and discipleship is catching.

Posttest Results:

- 41% of the participants responded that the difference between discipleship and evangelizing or making converts is that discipleship is teaching and evangelizing is catching.
- 29% responded that the difference is that evangelizing is teaching and discipleship is catching.

- 18% responded that the difference is that discipleship is joining the church and evangelizing is getting visitors in church.
- 12% responded that discipleship and evangelizing are both the same.

Question 11: What if my ministry has a lot of people ready to be disciples but not enough people ready to disciple them?

Pretest Results:

- 71.43% of the participants responded that if their ministry has a lot of people ready to be disciples but not enough people ready to disciple them then they would begin with who they have and encourage others to join.
- 21.43% responded that they would pray for more leaders.
- 7.14% responded that they would double-up on discipleship classes.

Posttest Results:

- 68% of the participants responded that if their ministry has a lot of people ready to be disciples but not enough people ready to disciple them then they would begin with who they have and encourage others to join.
- 21% responded that they would pray for more leaders.
- 11% responded that they would double-up on discipleship classes.

Question 12: Is there a difference between healthy growing churches and non-healthy ones?

Pretest Results:

- 79% of the participants responded that there is a difference between healthy growing churches and non-healthy ones, because healthy churches have vital and sustainable discipleship ministries.
- 21% responded that there is a difference, because healthy churches have more resources to stay healthy.

Posttest Results:

- 94% of the participants responded that there is a difference between healthy growing churches and non-healthy ones, because healthy churches have vital and sustainable discipleship ministries.
- 6% responded that there is a difference, because healthy churches have more resources to stay healthy.

The third session was a sermon from Acts 1: 6-8 titled “You will be My Witnesses.” The purpose of this sermon was to create awareness in every believers that everyone is called to “GO” make disciples, and that we all need the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective in our witness when we evangelize someone or when we disciple them.. Without the power of the Holy Spirit nothing can be done.

Question 1: Do you need power when witnessing to unbelievers? Why or Why not?

- 99% of the participants responded, yes, we do need power because, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit our witness would not be effective.
- 1% responded that they did not know if the power of the Holy Spirit would help them witness.

Question 2: What power and power to do what?

- 90% of the participants responded the power that come from the Holy Spirit to make witnessing easier.
- 10% responded the power of the Holy Spirit, without that power witnessing would be ineffective.

Question 3: Briefly describe how you get this power?

- 80% of the participants responded that you get this power by praying.
- 10% responded that you get this power by believing and receiving Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior.
- 10% responded that you get this power by being redeemed and allowing God to work through you.

Question 4: What is the purpose of this power?

- 60% of the participants responded that the purpose of this power is to help them to speak with courage and boldness in sharing the Word of God.
- 30% had no response.
- 10% responded that the power through faith allows them to share their stories.

Question 5: How can you start witnessing?

- 70% of the participants responded that they can start witnessing by telling their own stories of how Jesus helped and saved them.
- 20% had no response.
- 10% responded that they can start witnessing by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them.

Question 6: What kind of witness are you?

- 50% had no response.
- 20% responded that they were willing witnesses.
- 10% responded that they were good witnesses.
- 10% responded that they were bold witnesses.
- 10% responded that they were timid witnesses.

The fourth session was a Bible study which came from John 15:16. The focus of this Bible study was to show believers how evangelism, discipleship and the Great Commission are all inter linked together and that it is what God has commanded all believers to do, so that our purpose can be fulfilled.

Question 1: Who empowered you to go make disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 75% of the participants responded that Jesus empower them to go make disciples.
- 25% responded that the pastor empower them to go make disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that Jesus empower them to go make disciples.
- 10% responded that the church empowers them to go make disciples
- 0% responded that the pastor empowers them to go make disciples or they did not know.

Question 2: Under whose authority do we go make disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 75% of the participants responded that under authority of God that they go make disciples.
- 12.5% responded that it is under the authority of the church that they go make disciples.
- 12.5% responded that it is under the authority of the pastor that they go make disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 60% of the participants responded that it is under the authority of God that they go make disciples.
- 40% responded that it is under the authority of God, the church and the pastor that they go make disciples.

Question 3: Who ordains a person to go make disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 75% of the participants responded that God ordains a person to go make disciples.
- 25% responded that the pastor ordains a person to go make disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that God ordains a person to go make disciples.
- 10% responded that the pastor ordains a person to go make disciples.

Question 4: What are you doing when you are making disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 50% of the participants responded that they are living God's purpose for their life they are making disciples.
- 37.5% responded that they are obeying the Word when they are making disciples.
- 12.5% responded that they are living their purpose when they are making disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 54.5% of the participants responded that they are living God's purpose for their life they are making disciples.
- 45.5% responded that they are obeying the Word when they are making disciples.

Question 5: What does bearing fruit means in relation to discipleship?

Pretest Results:

- 37.5% of the participants responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means Christians producing other Christians and the reproduction of God plan.

- 37.5% responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to the lost.
- 25% responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means Christians producing other Christians.

Posttest Results:

- 80 % of the participants responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means Christians producing other Christians and the reproduction of God plan.
- 10% responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means Christians producing other Christians.
- 10% responded that bearing fruits in relation to discipleship, means the reproduction of God's plan.

Question 6: Is mentoring important in discipleship?

Pretest Results:

- 75% of the participants responded that mentoring is important in discipleship
- 25% responded that mentoring is important in discipleship in all cases.

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that mentoring is important in discipleship
- 10% % responded that mentoring is important in discipleship in all cases.

Question 7: Are there any rewards for making disciples?

Pretest Result:

- 75% of the participants responded that blessings are the rewards for making disciples.
- 25% responded that recognition from the pastor are the rewards for making disciples.

Posttest Results:

- 100% of the participants responded that blessings are the rewards for making disciples.

Question 8: What is the mission of making disciples?

Pretest Results:

- 75% of the participants responded that the mission of making disciples is soul winning.
- 25% responded that the mission of making disciples is to preach to the lost.

Posttest Results:

- 53.8% of the participants responded that the mission of making disciples is soul winning.
- 23.1% responded that the mission of making disciples is to preach to the lost.
- 15.4% responded that the mission of making disciples is to share their knowledge of the Bible.
- 7.7% responded that the mission of making disciples is to grow the church.

The fifth session was a Sunday discipleship training session. The lesson came from Luke 9: 57-62. The focus and purpose of this lesson was to show believers that there are costs and sacrifices associated with becoming effective disciples and to disciple others.

Question 1: What is true discipleship?

- 51% of the participants responded that true discipleship is denial of self and earthly ties and in certain circumstances obligations of blood-relationships.
- 20% responded that true discipleship is sharing the Gospel and following Jesus.
- 20% responded that true discipleship is following Jesus.
- 10% responded that true discipleship is sharing the Gospel.

Question 2: Briefly describe why believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship?

- 40% of the participants responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because it a command given by Jesus.
- 10% responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because we do not belong to ourselves, we belong to God and are here to serve and obey him and His commandments.
- 10% responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because they cannot be an effective disciple with worldly distractions.
- 10% responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because God should be first.
- 10% responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because God does not put conditions when we ask Him for His Help.
- 13% responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because we must be ready to go when God tells us to.
- 7 % responded that believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship, because we are called to be Disciples of Christ.

Question 3: Is there a cost for discipleship?

- 100% of the participants responded that there is a cost for discipleship.

Question 4: List some of the things that discipleship costs?

- 50% of the participants responded that discipleship cost family, time, money, comforts, desires, and security.
- 40% responded that discipleship cost time, friends, money desires and sacrifices.
- 10% responded that discipleship cost friends, money and family

Question 5: Does true discipleship require sacrifices?

- 100% of the participants responded that true discipleship require sacrifices.

Question 6: List some of the sacrifices?

- 90% of the participants responded that some of the sacrifices are family, friends, home, finances, and time.
- 10% did not respond.

Question 7: What can you do to become better disciples?

- 50% of the participants responded that to become better disciples they must share their stories.
- 30% responded that to become better disciples they must share the Gospel with the lost.
- 20% responded that to become better disciples they must be committed and follow through on the commitments they make.

With all the sessions on teaching about discipleship and evangelism completed, the next session was discussions with the participants. The discussions were geared around the topics of effective discipleship and evangelism. The participants formed several groups and following are some of the items discussed:

- Ideas to improve the model.
- The effectiveness of the teaching on the participants.
- Lack of knowledge on discipleship and evangelism.
- Ongoing discipleship training.
- Purposeful evangelism.

All the participants agreed that some of the teaching was new to them.

The final part of the project was a discipleship training activity in harmony with a custom-made actual field experience on evangelism. This was fashioned in the form of a small skit, conducted with the partners of GEM. The purpose of this activity and the most

critical aspect of this field work was that it allowed the participants to practice their knowledge gained through the session and to identify the interwoven fabric of discipleship and evangelism. It allowed participants to witness the reaction and interaction with strangers who comes to church, or when they encountered people in different situations and scenarios. It was also showed them the true depth, cost and sacrifices that true effective discipleship would require. True disciples must be ready to give up many things, for example, time, finances, personal comfort and much more, so that the Good News of the gospel and the love of Jesus might be shared, not only to people like ourselves but to people of all races. True disciples must cross cultural lines, religious barriers, nationalities and backgrounds, to reach the masses so that we can “Go make disciples of all nations.”

Activity

The activity began with paring of the participants two by two to send them out. The activities included that a few chosen participants impersonate different characters, example are a homeless man, a homeless bag lady, a prostituted, an alcoholic man (wino), and several young Muslin women of the Islamic faith. Each participant was instructed to dress and act the role they were chosen for. Instructions were for teach one to act as though they had never heard about Jesus and were very reluctant to listen or receive Jesus Christ as their savior. The responsibility of the participants whose role was that of the congregation and disciples was to share the Word of God, attend to the needs and to get each individual to accept Jesus as their savior. None of the participants were given a script to read, so the scenarios were impromptu and adlibbed making the situation as realistic as possible.

Results

The participants were encouraged to interact with each participant individually. They went out of their way to accommodate and meet the needs of each person. The homeless man was shown love by being offered a place to stay, as well as food. He was encouraged to put his hope for a brighter and better future in Jesus. The homeless woman or bag lady asked for various needs to be taken care of and she was given what she needed, which allowed her to see that God does care about her situation. The alcoholic person wanted money which he did not get but he stuck around to listen and acknowledged that he might be convinced to change his ways and give his life to Christ. Each participant who played the role of the disciple went above and beyond to accommodate to the needs of the individual. They demonstrated how a true and effective disciple should proceed in their encounter with the un-churched and the lost.

The female participants whose role was that of the women of the Muslim faith were convinced that Jesus is Lord. Some were willing to dedicate their life to Christ as a result of listening to the disciple explains to them who Jesus is and why he is the living Son of God. The participant whose role was to play a prostitute, who had never been saved, made it very difficult for the disciple who engaged her in a conversation about Jesus. The more difficult she was in her belief that no man never died and rose again, the more encouraging and detailed the disciple was about how and why Jesus died and rose again and could make life better and take care of her needs. The disciple expresses concern for the life and salvation of the individual. The more excuses the individual made for not giving their life to an unseen God, the more patient and caring the disciple became

explaining how Jesus had encountered other prostitutes and was not concerned by their past or reputation.

The participants gave a summary of the different scenarios and encounters, and all came to the conclusion that to be able to disciple someone, one must be ready and willing to make sacrifices in order to disciple others. A critical analysis of the data collected from the participants in the field work exercises revealed that there was an increased in knowledge and awareness during the process. One of the discoveries that were made was that Christianity embodies discipleship and evangelism as part of a believer's life style. All believers are required to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to share the "Good News of the Gospel." Another discovery was that effective discipleship demands and requires sacrifices. All sacrifices are a part of life's journey but identifying and naming the sacrifices required as part of being a true and effective disciple for Christ was hard for many of the participants to identify with, and they realize that it is a task that cannot be undertaken lightly, and there will be rewards for all the sacrifices made for the Kingdom.

It is necessary to study to show oneself approved as the Bible states. True effective disciples must be ready to interact with people across all cultures, nationalities, faiths, and situations who do not know Jesus as their personal savior in order that the command to "go make disciples of all nations," can be fulfilled. Disciples must approach each day with an attitude that our purpose is to impact others so that they too may come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

This project emerged out of concern for the growth and success of the context. Reflecting on the concern created the desire within to find a solution to solve not only the problem but to be able to help people grow spiritually and build a closer relationship in their walk with God. The desire to find a way that would aid others and prevent this problem opened the doors for this project to be birthed. The project was spiritually rewarding and knowledgeable for me as well as the congregation.

Growing a fairly new congregation requires an increase in church membership. A broader look shows that numerical growth includes increased attendance in worship service, church school, and Bible study. Reviewing the number of active members and not the numbers that is on the church records was the most important factor in this situation. According to the command given by Jesus to the disciples in Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” is the responsibility of each and every believer.

The context for this project is Global EmPOWERment Ministries, (GEM) located in Stone Mountain Georgia. GEM is going on its ninth year, and has experienced tremendous growth, but is facing a problem of commitment and true effective discipleship. The congregants of this ministry were immediately given the name *partner* rather than member, suggesting a better sense of belonging and a stronger sense of

connection with the ministry. Many came and became partners with GEM, but have not stayed.

The process and the dynamic force for this project was the stimulating and real concern of the committed partners of this non-denominational congregation. The precedence was the fact that many believers came and became a partner/member, but did not ascribe to the qualities of a true effective disciple. Global EmPOWERment Ministries partners/members sees itself as disciples of Jesus Christ, and desires to create effective disciples by empowering its partners/members spiritually, physically, and economically. Adopting a biblical model of discipleship through corporate worship, prayer, scriptural study, missions and outreach will aid this body of believers to accomplish the command given to all by Christ.

This project model served as an instrument of purpose and will give meaning to a person's life. This model was an attempt to address the issues of discipleship and evangelism and its relation to "the Great Commission," its relation to the church or body of believers, to include exposing and educating the congregation about their responsibilities as disciples.

The methodology and ministry model contained a four-hour workshop on discipleship, evangelism, and the ways they are inter-connected and linked together. Included in the methodology is a series of sessions in Bible study, discipleship training and a sermon on witnessing, the sacrifices, the costs, and the rewards of discipleship. The writer was pleased with the process in general and sees this project being implemented in a wide range of congregations.

The writer is satisfied with the entire effects of this project, even the critical and analytical reflection on the outcomes. However, there are some definite areas that need to be strengthening in order to make the model a motivational and transformational process. These recommendations will be implemented by the writer within the context of this project after the wrap up of this doctoral program. The writer would recommend that the entire project become a church-wide process. Participation for the ongoing development of this project model to address the specific problem of infusing evangelism and discipleship into the DNA of the church, Global Empowerment Ministries, which can lead in ways to avoid plateauing and experience success and growth.

One of the first steps that will be taken is to do an evaluation of the model. A S.W.O.T. analysis of the model to determine its strengths and effectiveness, to identify the weaknesses, create opportunities and eliminate threats. Upon identification of the weaknesses, a critical analysis of the impact of the weaknesses can be made. Changes can be made to adapt and change the model to eliminate those weaknesses and change it to become strengths. Doing so would increase the strengths, eliminate the weaknesses, and increase and create more opportunities for the effectiveness of the model. Identifying the threats of the model would also present opportunities to creatively eliminate these threats from the model.

The primary goal must be focused on the training and development of each leader and each partner/member so that they can be fully equipped to be a disciple-making partner/member. Secondly, the development of a disciple-making curriculum for the entire congregation to cover all age groups must be done. Thirdly, as part of the ongoing education and awareness within the body of believers is integrating a disciple making

curriculum for the entire church. Fourthly, as part of the educational and spiritual growing process will be integrating the curriculum to new converts and new partners/members from beginners, intermediate and adult level for spiritual maturity.

The final recommendation is engaging the entire church in the educational process and practical application of disciple making and evangelism and making this an ongoing part of the church structure. Others areas of training and development can include delegation, influence, communication and motivation. Delegation will teach leaders how to delegate as a leader and to understand how to trust that the tasks will be completed.

Today's economy has affected all religious organizations. Global Empowerment Ministry must work to engage partners/ members to become effective disciples. A biblical model of disciple making will lead in the development of a strong positive relationship for the partners/members with God. Leaders and partners/members will have significant impact on each other and their commitment to make disciples of all nations. This will strengthen relationships within the congregation, and benefit the church.

Engaging in the spiritual development of the congregation through discipleship will create a clearer understanding of each person responsibility in the vision, mission and purpose of Global Empowerment Ministry. Making a difference in the world through a higher level of effective discipleship will grow the body of believers and create the bond that people desire. The research has shown a direct relationship between the qualities of discipleship and evangelism, and its relation to sustaining growth, spirituality, and transformational qualities in believers.

The history of the early church tells us that the disciples of Jesus Christ went throughout Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and even to the uttermost parts of the earth to share the Good News of the Gospel. History speaks about Rome, Spain, Greece and India to name a few, where the Gospel was taken. Looking at the Christian church today, the gospel is being told throughout the world in many forms. Technology has become so advance with many options to visually see and hear the word through social media, for example, Face-book, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Yahoo, and Satellite Television etc. However, research has determines and there is evidence of many who have not yet heard of the Good News of the Gospel.

Throughout history the church and Christian believers have gone through persecution, martyrdom and many other changes for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to fulfill the command given to “Go make disciples of all nations.” Religious organizations attract more people to their organization when the emphasis is centered around Jesus through discipleship based on a biblical model. Moral values, ethical behaviors, commitment, relationships, expectations, nurturing, empowerment and transformation are fully released by all individuals that are true Disciples of Christ. Finally, discipleship is not something you do to people; it is something you do with people.

APPENDIX A
PRE AND POST TEST

Pre and Post Test Disciple-making Questionnaire

Q1: Why should I be making disciples?

- A. The Great Commission
- B. The Great Commandment
- C. To grow the Church
- D. To impress God

Q2: How do I disciple someone?

- A. Bring them to church
- B. Find a F.A.T (Faithful, Available, and Teachable) follower
- C. Encourage them to read their Bible
- D. Take them to a discipleship seminar

Q3: How do I find someone to disciple me?

- A. Pray for a good leader
- B. Pray for a good teacher/pastor
- C. Ask someone
- D. Start by building conviction about discipleship.

Q4: Am I too busy for discipleship?

- A. Yes, God understands your schedules
- B. No, God will make room for you to be obedient
- C. No, I'll just fit it into my schedule
- D. Yes, but I will make time for it sooner or later

Q5: What does discipleship look like?

- A. Meeting weekly, teaching scripture and sharing your faith
- B. Meeting regularly, teaching scripture and sharing your faith when possible
- C. Daily walking with God.
- D. Signing up for the discipleship committee.

Q6: What characteristics do I look for in a potential disciple?

- A. Find an individual who is F.A.T.
- B. Find an energetic person who is willing
- C. Find a teachable person
- D. Find a new Christian who is on fire for Jesus

Q5: What do I do if my church is not holistically making disciples?

- A. Find a church that is holistically making disciples
- B. Take your concern to the church body
- C. Pray and ask God to convict leaders toward being obedient to discipleship
- D. Ask an expert to come in and teach your church

Q6: What if I feel I am not quite ready to make disciples?

- A. All Christians can make disciples if they are F.A.T.
- B. Pray for God to make you ready
- C. Ask God to convict you to change your mind
- D. Do it when the time is right.

Q7: What is the difference between discipleship and Bible study?

- A. They are both the same
- B. One is required by God and the other by Jesus
- C. Discipleship helps you grow, Bible study help you learn.
- D. The Bible prepares you to do discipleship.

Q8: What is the difference between discipleship and evangelizing/making converts?

- A. The are both the same
- B. Evangelizing is catching and discipleship is teaching
- C. Evangelizing is teaching and discipleship is catching
- D. Discipleship is joining the church and evangelizing is getting visitors in Church

Q9: What if my ministry has a lot of people ready to be discipled but not enough people ready to disciple them?

- A. Pray for more leaders
- B. Ask those ready to be discipled to wait
- C. Begin with who you have and encourage others to join.
- D. Double-up on discipleship classes.

Q10: Is there a difference between healthy, growing churches and non-healthy ones?

- A. Yes, healthy churches have more members
- B. Yes, healthy churches have more resources to stay healthy
- C. Yes healthy churches have strong evangelism programs
- D. Yes, healthy churches have vital and sustainable discipleship ministries

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONS FROM ACTS 1

Evangelism Discipleship and the Great Commission
United Theological Seminary
Stella Biswah, Doctoral Candidate

1. Do you need power when witnessing to unbelievers? Why or Why not?

2. What power and power to do what?

3. Briefly describe how you get this power?

4. What is the purpose of this Power?

5. How can you start witnessing?

6. What kind of witness are you?

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONS FROM JOHN 15

Discipleship and the Great Commission
United Theological Seminary
Stella Biswah, Doctoral Candidate

John 15:16

1. Who empowers you to GO make disciples?
 - A. The Church
 - B. The Pastor
 - C. Jesus
 - D. I don't know
2. Under whose authority do we GO to make disciples?
 - A. God
 - B. The Church
 - C. The Pastor
 - D. All of the above
3. Who ordains a person to GO make disciples?
 - A. The Church
 - B. The Pastor
 - C. The Bishop
 - D. God
4. What are you doing when you are making disciples?
 - A. Obeying the pastor
 - B. Living your purpose
 - C. Obeying the Word
 - D. Living God's purpose for your life
5. What does bearing fruit mean in relation to discipleship?
 - A. Christians producing other Christians
 - B. Reproduction is part of God's plan
 - C. Proclaiming "The Good News of Jesus Christ," to the lost
 - D. Both A & B
6. Is mentoring important in discipleship?
 - A. No
 - B. In some cases
 - C. Yes
 - D. In all cases
7. Are there any rewards for making disciples?

- A. Inner satisfaction
 - B. Blessings
 - C. Recognition from the church
 - D. Recognition from the pastor
8. What is the mission of making disciples?
- A. To share your knowledge of the Bible
 - B. Soul winning
 - C. To grow the church
 - D. To preach to the lost

APPENDIX D
QUESTIONS FROM LUKE 9

Evangelism Discipleship and the Great Commission
United Theological Seminary
Stella Biswah, Doctoral Candidate

Luke 9: 57-62

1. What is true Discipleship?

- A. True discipleship is denial of self and earthly ties and in certain circumstances obligations of blood-relationship.
- B. True discipleship is sharing the Gospel
- C. True discipleship is following Jesus Christ

2. Briefly describe why believers cannot set conditions on the call of discipleship?

3. Is there a cost for discipleship?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

4. List some of the things that discipleship costs.

5. Does true discipleship require sacrifices?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

6. List some of the sacrifices.

7. What can you do to become better disciples?



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